WHAT OF TO-DAY

FATHER
BERNARD VAUGHAN

Philip Morrow.
+ 1920

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WHAT OF TO-DAY?

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE SINS OF SOCIETY

THE MATCHLESS MAID OF FRANCE

SOCIETY SIN AND OUR SAVIOUR

SOCIALISM FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT

Etc.

Photograph by P. MacDonald, New York.

FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

What of To-Day?

BY

FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

"The highest Faith makes still the highest man;
For we grow like the things our souls believe,
And rise or sink as we aim high or low."

NEW YORK
McBRIDE, NAST AND COMPANY
1915

12372 CM

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Dédié

À Sa Majesté

ALBERT LE GRAND

ROI

des Braves Belges

par son humble et son obéissant serviteur

BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

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Nihil Obstat

J. N. STRASSMAIER, S.J.,

Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur

EDM: CANONICUS SURMONT, D.D.,

Vicarius Generalis.

Westmonasterii,

die 7 Novembris, 1914.

PREFACE

DURING the present crisis of our history it is the business of every citizen to find out how he may best serve his country. If held back by age or duty from joining the colours he must cast about to see what he can do at home. There is work enough to go round; no one need drop out and join the army of the unemployed. As a matter of fact every section of the community has its loins girt and its lamp trimmed and is eagerly asking: "How can I help?" "What can I do?" Social, political, religious barriers have been swept aside with the incoming tide of true Christian Democracy.

Never was there a closer union among the so-called classes and masses, never a more kindly or a more genial relationship between them; never was a finer spirit of the social sense, or a stronger proof of Christian self-sacrifice astir in our midst.

Having done my small part in helping men "to sign on," and in appealing for the public support of a bi-weekly Flemish paper to reach those of our Refugees who can speak and read

nothing else, I feel the next best thing to be done is to try to raise a little financial help for the relief of such as find themselves stranded without money or equipment in England, where they want to earn a living and pay their way. Accordingly I am making bold to place on the book market for their benefit this volume, made up of papers on a variety of subjects, which I venture to hope may serve as finger-posts to those of my readers who, like other pilgrims along the way of life, may find themselves for the moment at a junction where the roads cross without being quite certain which of them is the one leading to their true destiny.

Some of us did not take the right turning after the late South African War; or if we did for a while we did not keep to it, so that the moral status of our country in the estimate of some of us became worse after than it was before the war. Many, it would seem, only half-repentant, relapsed, returning from the Narrow to the Broad Road.

To-day we are plunged into a life-and-death struggle the like of which has never been witnessed in the history of the world. God, in His saving mercy, may, perhaps, have permitted this scourge to fall upon us that the very pain of it might bring us to our right senses, and teach

us that we have not been sent into this war-faring world to have "a good time" but to merit "a good eternity." War is a great teacher, and in its school we get to learn what years of peace often may fail to teach. War, though contrary to the perfect Christian ideal, is not an unmitigated evil, still less is it an unmixed good—"It is of mingled yarn, good and bad together." We must note the distinction.

We have to deal with two schools of thought, the one represented by Nietzsche and Bernhardi, and the other by Tolstoi and Ramsay Macdonald.

The teaching of the former class makes out that war is the supreme good, a "biological necessity," the essential factor of morality, the religion of valour, the legitimate expression of highest virtue; the latter class, on the contrary, has no words strong enough with which to condemn war. It is for this class of men the supreme evil; they say, nothing can justify it, no good can come out of it. Lifting up his hands in horror of it, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald exclaims, in a phrase forestalled by the infidel Voltaire: "The hollow mockery of it! that men using the same name and worshipping the same God should, from rival battlefields and rival pulpits, put up rival prayers asking for rival blessings."

So terribly blasphemous to him is the thought that Germans, Russians, French and English should be invoking a blessing on their rival forces, that he goes on to say: "I wish we were back in the old pagan days when every land had its own idol to which it could pray."*

Clearly there is a *via media* between these two extreme lines of thought. We must be reasonable and not allow ourselves to be unduly influenced in giving unqualified praise to or in expressing wholesale condemnation of war. To those who have persuaded themselves that war must be a supreme good because forsooth it evokes noble and splendid qualities both in those at the front and in those remaining at home, I should like to say that plagues and earthquakes, shipwrecks and conflagrations also provide the occasion for the display of all manner of virtues which make no less for heroism. And as we pray to be delivered from these latter calamities, so also we beg deliverance from war itself and its ravages. On the other hand, to those who teach that war is a supreme evil, that nothing can justify it, and that to suppress violence by violence is criminal, I should wish to point out that if such a doctrine as this were to obtain universally, then there would presently be an end to the practice of

* *Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 2nd, 1914.

rightness and of justice on earth. Honour would go, Truth would go, Justice would go. There would be nothing left but what you want to be rid of—internecine war.

We are fighting to-day in the first instance because there is something we prize more than all our national possessions, and that is our plighted word and our national honour. Had England cringed before the foe, and turned a dull ear to the cry for help from Belgium, every Britisher to-day would feel he had been sold by his Government into a slavery compared with which the serfdom of our Anglo-Saxon forbears was freedom.

As for the "rival prayers of rival nations," instead of finding anything in them to condemn I find much to praise. As it does not shock, but, on the contrary, edifies me to hear of Nonconformists asking God's blessing on their lives and their good works, so am I comforted no less to read of Bavarians and Rhine-men pleading for a blessing on themselves, their arms and their banners. The fact that the enemy begs God to bless his cause is in itself a proof that he believes in its rightness. Do not such prayers go to show that the rank and file of the armies against us are doing their duty in good faith? Thank God for that! Truth to tell, the German people believe

what they are told "officially." Accordingly our enemy is persuaded that Count Schwerin, the President of the Prussian Diet, expressed accurately the German position when he said in that assembly: "We have honourably striven for peace, but have been forced into war by a jealous and envious enemy."

And again: "We are not fighting for a greater sphere of power, the enlargement of our Empire, or base commercial profit, but to defend our homes and families." The people believing such statements as these may well beseech God to bless their righteous cause. We ourselves do not lay claim to the monopoly of justice. All we know about our side of the case is that "our national interests, of which the highest is our national honour," have compelled us to unsheathe the war-sword and to fling to the wind the scabbard till the fight is done and won.

Had the late Lord Roberts's strong note of warning been heeded there would have been no war. But like Cassandra, who prophesied the Trojan War but was not believed, so did he warn my country of what was about to come upon her; but he too was set down as a false prophet and told to mind his own business. It is not easy to know which to admire most, that great soldier's eloquent appeal before the declaration

of war for national service, or his eloquent silence after its declaration about the neglect of that appeal. In both cases he was an object lesson to us all in the value of character.

Is it too much to hope that when righteous and abiding peace shall have been proclaimed at the close of this warfare, England will then see her way to establish, if only for the sake of the discipline it furnishes, some system of National Training for her sons of Empire?

In this college, where I am writing, there has been now for many years compulsory service of all the boys in the O.T.C. What it has done for the discipline, the alertness, the character and the patriotism of my old school language cannot express. It has transformed the school. It has done this besides, it has sent not fewer than 350 Stonyhurst lads to join the colours, and it is training as many more to-day in the ways of loyalty, manliness and patriotism.*

I do not offer any apology for referring in these pages to German barbarism, atrocities and arson, because instead of repudiating these charges of brutality German authorities defend them.

* Between Stonyhurst and Beaumont, to mention two only out of our seven Jesuit schools in England, to-day there cannot be many fewer than seven hundred alumni with commissions or in the ranks. Lord Roberts's warning, I am proud to say, has been heeded by our Catholic schools.

Not only did Bismarck tell the troops to leave the vanquished nothing but eyes to weep with, but the present Chancellor reminded us how Germany, admittedly in the wrong, would hack her way through Belgium to victory; and to-day I read a letter sent to the *Hamburger Nachrichten* by General von Disfurth, in which he declares, "every act of whatever nature . . . is fully justified." Read the following extracts of this letter, and be satisfied about the real situation of this super-nation with the monopoly of Kultur.

The General states that:

"No object whatever is served by taking any notice of the accusations of barbarity levelled against Germany by the foreign critics. Frankly, we are, and must be, barbarians, if by this word we understand those who wage war relentlessly to the uttermost degree. It would be incompatible with the dignity of the German Empire and with the proud traditions of the Prussian army to defend our courageous soldiers from the accusations which have been hurled against them in foreign and neutral countries. We owe no explanations to anyone.

"There is nothing for us to justify and nothing for us to explain away. Every act of whatever nature committed by our troops for the purpose of discouraging, defeating, and destroy-

ing our enemies is a brave act, a good deed, and is fully justified.

"It is of no consequence whatever if all the monuments ever created, all the pictures ever painted, all the buildings ever erected by the great architects of the world be destroyed if, by their destruction, we promote Germany's victory over the enemies who have vowed her complete annihilation.

"In times of peace we might perhaps regard the loss of such things; but at the present moment not a word of regret, not a thought, should be squandered upon them. War is war, and must be waged with severity. The commonest, ugliest stone placed to mark the place of burial of a German grenadier is a more glorious and venerable monument than all the cathedrals of Europe put together. . . .

"For my part, I hope that in this war we have merited the title of barbarians. Let neutral peoples and our enemies stop their empty chatter, which may well be compared with the twitter of birds. Let them cease to talk of the cathedral of Rheims and of all the churches and all the castles in France which have shared its fate. These things do not interest us. Our troops must achieve victory. What else matters?" *

* *Sunday Chronicle*, Nov. 15th, 1914.

One way of partaking in another's sin is by silence. It is the sin of the coward. If I did not denounce publicly the anti-Christian utterances of the German war party I should have to write myself down a coward. In this day more especially we must think straight, speak straight, and act straight, or else fall back into the ranks of the unemployed.

I close this preface with the expression of my profound grief at the sad loss the whole Empire has sustained by the death of our revered and beloved Field-Marshal Lord Roberts. I had fondly hoped he would have done me the honour of introducing my volume to the public. In answer to my request he sent me the first letter quoted below, which, to my thinking, serves better than a preface as providing for my audience such a noble object lesson in the Christian patriotism advocated in the following pages. On my expressing myself in this sense to Lord Roberts he wrote me another cordial letter which also I have pleasure in introducing.

"ENGLEMERE,
"ASCOT, BERKS.
"*October 19th*, 1914.

"DEAR FATHER VAUGHAN,

"I am much obliged for your letter of the 18th instant and greatly appreciate the compli-

ment you have paid me in asking me to write a preface to your forthcoming book. Under ordinary circumstances I should be only too glad to meet your wishes, but, as matters stand, I regret it is impossible.

"I can hardly cope with the heavy correspondence this war has entailed upon me, and the many extra duties I have undertaken in connection with it take up so much of my time that I can hardly get through my ordinary routine.

"Were it not for this, what you propose would have been a congenial task, as the book will, I am sure, be most interesting. I hope you will send me a copy when it appears.

"Yours sincerely,

"ROBERTS, F.M."

"ENGLEMERE,
"ASCOT, BERKS.
"*October 20th*, 1914.

"DEAR FATHER VAUGHAN,

"You are most welcome to use my letter of the 19th instant, as you kindly propose. I feel flattered you should think the letter could be of use.

"Yours sincerely,

"ROBERTS."

Stonyhurst College,
Nov. 16th, 1914.

BERNARD VAUGHAN.

WHAT OF TO-DAY?

I

THE NEW SPIRIT

THERE are two kinds of writers, as there are two kinds of speakers—those who have to say something, and those who have something to say. I believe, after due consideration, that I belong to the second class; for I have something to say, something at any rate which I feel ought to be said. I have something to say with which many, perhaps most, of my readers will not agree. If, indeed, men in general were ready to agree with me, there would be no necessity for me to write at all. But I must be prepared for more than passive disagreement, and I am quite aware that to be called a reactionary, a conventionalist, or a pessimist is quite the mildest criticism I may expect.

We are living in an age in which, more than in any other perhaps, new ideas are being put forward, new views of morality are industriously disseminated, new solutions of the old human problems are daily presented to us. It is sufficient, it appears, that a point of view should be old or conventional for its instant condemnation; and we hear a great deal of the spirit of revolt, of

the wisdom of the rising generation, of the casting off of the shackles, religious, intellectual, and moral, which have hitherto, it seems, impeded man so seriously in his progress towards "freedom," that the wonder is how he has managed to raise himself above the brutes at all.

Now, I would not have it supposed that because I am one of those whose final exit from this stage cannot be long delayed, I am, therefore, wholly out of sympathy with every new movement, that I cling to certain old beliefs and conventions merely because they are old. But if there are some things in this "new spirit" with which we must all sympathise—such movements, I mean, as tend to real social reform, to the bettering of the condition of the poorer classes, and the growth of the broader spirit of brotherhood—there are, nevertheless, dangerous indications that in the all but universal revolt against the old order, much is being light-heartedly attacked that is not only useful but absolutely essential to the spiritual, and therefore the real, welfare of all sections of society.

We are pelted with specious arguments against "conventional" marriage, "conventional" morality, "conventional" standards of all sorts. Yet those who attack such conventions never stop to ask themselves on what grounds these long-established ideas are based. For them a convention is necessarily wrong. Now to enter upon an argument with such people is futile,

partly because argument usually leads to nothing but a bitter controversy, barren of result, and partly because their own methods are not logical, but, as a rule, inductive.

A dramatist, for example, will give us a play whose moral is that women are entitled to lead their own lives, as the cant phrase goes, with the same licence that men are popularly supposed to enjoy. But, even supposing discussion to be possible on such a subject, we shall not find in the class of play I am referring to any hint that it is woman's function to raise man to a higher level instead of competing with him as to which shall be the baser sex.

In novels, or at any rate in many novels which have gained great popularity, the same tendency is observable. Old-fashioned ideas—I do not disown the adjective—are held up to ridicule, not without skill, I admit, while the heroine, about whose mode of life the less said the better, is depicted as an admirable character, whose chief quality is to prove her superiority over the rest of the humdrum characters of the story by the audacity of her views and actions.

These, and other equally abominable fallacies, are what I would wish to raise my voice against, all the more loudly since such ideas are unhappily gaining ground, and, alas, our modern system of education is not directed towards combating them.

This book, then, forms my protest against

the spirit permeating the age: an age which is seemingly determined to live without religion, without morality, without discipline or restraint of any sort. I have admitted that this spirit of revolt is not altogether bad; if directed into proper channels it might be wholly good. But the terrible truth is, that the revolt we are witnessing to-day is not mainly against such modern conditions of life as we all deplore, but against authority of every kind.

The right of every man to lead his own life in the manner which appears most pleasing in his own eyes—that is the ideal which our twentieth century revolters of every class, consciously or unconsciously, have put before themselves. I say emphatically that no man or woman has that right. Mere denial of the duty we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves, will not rid us of that threefold debt; the mere assertion that man is free to do as he pleases, does not, and never will, release the spiritual, the moral side of him from that threefold obligation. It is the triple cord not easily broken.

II

THE WAR AND THE EMPIRE

No Englishman, I think, can feel otherwise than proud of the spirit in which the call to arms has been met. With few exceptions—and those of little account—each of us has, in his own way, done something and made some sort of sacrifice for the sake of his country.

Whatever be the result of the titanic struggle to which, through no fault of our own, we are committed, we can at least feel that we have done our duty, that our consciences are clear, and that we have played the man as befits those who have so glorious a heritage to maintain. Never have we fought in a more righteous cause, and never, even in the days of Napoleon, have we entered upon a war with less thought of personal profit or national aggrandisement.

No one in his senses supposes that the Servian episode alone could, by any exaggeration, have formed sufficient justification for the world-wide conflagration now raging. It was the German War Lords who chose to seize the occasion as a suitable one for the prosecution of their own designs of illimitable power. Nothing could

have been easier than for Germany to have settled the Austro-Servian dispute by diplomatic methods. But we now realise only too well that Germany was bent on conquest and was but awaiting her opportunity to unsheathe the sword. She wanted peace only till she was ready for war, and before the allied nations were aware of her purpose, she was already mobilising her troops. When the favourable hour struck, when the opportunity arrived, the enemy rose up in his full strength and declared, through his Chancellor, that the German troops "would hack their way to victory."

The publication of the White Book, from which Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey drew the texts of their epoch-making speeches, has proved beyond all possible doubt that Germany was out to re-cast the map of Europe and to reconstruct the nations of the earth. The war party was determined to justify to the people its vast armaments. It had sat on the safety-valve long enough, and now it promised its teeming population nothing less than the French Colonial Empire as a reward for the patient endurance of the heavy burdens laid upon them by the ceaseless demands of their War Lords.

The lust of power and the greed of gain has so atrophied Prussia's moral sense that in her intoxication she has altogether forgotten those principles upon which alone civilised nations can live and flourish. Not only has the enemy

trampled on treaties to which he has solemnly signed his name, but he has invaded neutral territories where he had no right to a foothold and then stooped in his blind insolence to ask Great Britain to be a party to a bargain which was nothing less than the stabbing of a friend in the back. Germany's whole policy has been a conspiracy against honour, truth and freedom, while the German Chancellor, with infinite irony, has promised to make what was all wrong, all right. But not even the Chancellor himself knows the secret of performing such a miracle of black magic.

It is difficult, even with the facts before us, to believe that a people so cultured, so learned, so scientific and so brave could stoop to methods so base and contemptible, in order to facilitate the robbery of possessions to which they could show no claim. Never before has a civilised Christian nation adopted so cynically for its motto the theory that "the end justifies the means." But the war party — the party that boasts of its blood and iron policy—had to justify its methods somehow, by fair means or foul. The reported brutality of the Prussian soldiery in Belgium was not, as some people have tried to make out, an instance of the lust for blood suddenly breaking out among hitherto superficially civilised individuals. It was part of the calculated policy of Germany to strike terror into the hearts of those who should oppose her designs.

The German soldier is far too strongly disciplined to dare to commit such outrages as have been proved against him without the express sanction of superior officers who dominate him. The murders that lie at the door of Prussia have been committed deliberately. The victims whose blood cries to Heaven for vengeance have been offered as sacrifices to the German War God, whose other name is Odin. And if anyone still doubts the possibility of such inhuman savagery in this twentieth century, let him compare the conduct of the German soldiery in such towns as opened their gates without resistance with the awful massacres which followed the slightest attempt on the part of the Belgian villagers to defend their hearths and homes.

This catastrophic war which the overweening ambition and pride of Prussianised Germany has so suddenly let loose on the world is going to be a long and sanguinary struggle. None can doubt it. And it is equally certain that many sacrifices will be demanded of the British people and the British Empire before it can be ended. Yet we have many grounds for encouragement in the dark days that must lie before us. Germany has many millions of brave men at her command. Her forces are led by skilled leaders, and in their ranks every man is set and fixed like the cog of a wheel in the great engine of war. But their battle-cry has been set in a minor key. It lacks the vitality of fine motive,

and except on the plea that might is right, their fight cannot be justified. Like a blind Samson, Germany is grappling with ruin and destruction, and is hoping, if the worst should come to the worst, to involve the whole world in a common disaster with herself.

Therefore, on moral grounds alone, we have good reason to continue fighting with light, as well as stout, hearts. We have been forced into a war, of which there was no possibility of our keeping clear, save at the sacrifice of all that honourable men hold sacred. Once more, as of old, we have sent our mighty fleet to guard the seas; once more we have gathered together as great an army as we could. And our Empire from east to west stands shoulder to shoulder, with teeth set and muscles braced, resolving never to lay down arms till the aggressive force of blood and iron be broken and disarmed as was that of Napoleon a hundred years ago.

The troops of our Empire have rallied under the inspiring motto "For Honour, Truth and Freedom." We, a peace-loving Empire, have heard the cry and taken up arms, because we are not dead to what those words imply. We were slow to declare war; we needed no fresh fields of conquest; we had no ambitions but for peace and prosperity. We are a patient people, not easily provoked to aggressive action, but there is one thing we still cherish as dearer than

life—and I rejoice to be able to know that it is so—and that is British honour, British truth and British freedom.

The insulting bribe offered by Germany in the hope of keeping us neutral has stung this nation to the quick, and the effect has been to rouse the British spirit as it has never been roused before. Never has Britain in the whole of her glorious island-story engaged in a nobler crusade; never have her sons rallied with greater alertness to her colours; never have we had more reason to be proud of being the subjects of an Empire that would not break her word of honour and has shown that in the hour of need she still sets a higher value on moral, than on material, things.

I happened to be staying in Scotland during the first month of the war and nothing could have been more heartening to see than the eagerness of every man in that country to don the King's uniform and get to the front. I was talking to some Highland keepers, past the war age, on the subject. "What a pity it is," I said, "that you and I are too old for the fighting line."

"May be," replied one of them, "if the young are killed off we may yet be there, and we will die hard, every one of us."

Not so long ago—though it seems incredibly remote to us now—that word "Die-hard" was used as a contemptuous political term. But

to-day we are all Die-hards in the truest and noblest sense of the word. And if we are, by the blessing of God, to win through the most desperate crisis with which our Empire has ever been confronted, Die-hards we must continue to the bitter end.

More than anything else, I think, it is the consciousness of the justice of our cause that will carry us on to ultimate victory. The Empire is not handicapped by want of a motive in this deadly struggle. "Never," said Mr. Asquith in a ringing phrase, "has England gone to battle with a clearer conscience." In the words of the text we can feel—"If whole armies stand up against me, I will not fear; for Thou art with me." We are fighting—and we shall continue to fight—for all that makes for honour and freedom. Our English, Scottish and Irish soldiers, as well as the contingents from our oversea dominions, are inspired and actuated by principles which make irresistibly for victory. However the tide of battle may flow from day to day, whatever reverses we may be called upon to sustain, we shall bear all things with fortitude and courage if we keep steadily in mind the great fact that this war is one of moral against brute force.

We are armed and up to fight an organised power whose religion is might and whose ideal is "Germany, the arbiter of nations and the War Lord of the World." The struggle

may be long, the losses will be counted in hundreds of thousands, but if we are true to our traditions and our ideals, the shout of victory will be ours, and the sacrament of fire through which we are passing, will be for the cleansing of Europe. Chastened and purified it will emerge from those cleansing flames, and, if God wills, the end of this crusade shall bring about universal peace among the nations, so that instead of peoples armed to the teeth and ready to spring at one another's throats, there shall in the future be seen rising up on the earth a Brotherhood of nations, under the Fatherhood of God, living on terms with one another under the smile of heaven in a "multitude of peace." It may take years before we all become united in the bonds of Christian peace, but this war may be the means of bringing it about. It must be our constant and fervent prayer that there may be, in God's good time, found among all the Christian nations of the earth a righteous and enduring peace, with England and Germany knit closer together than ever before, not only by the ties of "blood thicker than water," but also by the bonds of love stronger than death.

III

THE REAL SUPERMAN

I.—His "Kultur"

Among the many false gods and unclean idols which the perversity of man's nature has set up as objects of adoration, I know of none more repulsive than the figure of that grinning monster whose temple is in the innermost courts of Teutonic "culture," and of whose gospel a madman was the fitting evangelist.

The worship of brute force is no new thing. Primitive communities indeed can have no other standard than that of physical strength and courage by which to measure the worth of their heroes. But it has been the chief justification of all civilised societies which have existed up to the present age, that they have recognised the superiority of moral virtue over mere bodily excellence, and have acknowledged that the highest intellectual or physical qualities do not in themselves constitute, if the moral attributes are lacking, a claim to the veneration or applause of mankind.

It has been reserved for our day, and for a civilisation which claims to be the most cultured the world has yet seen, to witness

the cult of the "Superman"—a monstrous being whose mission it is to prove his strength by setting up his own standard of morality, his own code of ethics, his own measure of right and wrong. Few of us, I imagine, have realised until the present war, that the theories of German philosophers could ever be translated into action, and fewer still can have understood into what terrible depths of depravity such gospel could lead a professedly cultured and civilised nation.

Confession is good for the soul. And while we recoil in horror from the long list of broken treaties, of dishonourable dealings, of shocking atrocities and of nameless outrages which stand to the discredit of the Nietzschean gospel, let us not forget that this veritable Moloch, this true Anti-Christ, has not lacked disciples even among ourselves, whose eyes have been blinded to the inner meaning of the teaching of the "Superman."

Mankind, in haste to get away from the teaching of Christianity, has, implicitly at least, accepted many of the doctrines of the materialistic philosophy of Germany. The Christian virtues of humility, obedience, chastity and penance have come to be regarded with contempt. Nietzsche's definition of "slave-morality" has been accepted by only too many as synonymous with the teaching of Christ. And the figure of the Superman, resolute and self-sufficient, mak-

ing no terms with Heaven or Hell, and carving his way to success, heedless of the tears or groans of his weaker brethren, has had, for a large number of us, an irresistible and unholy fascination.

Three dreary months of reality has cleared the air. Our eyes have been opened by the actions of the Superman himself, and we see him for what he is—a barbarian and a bully, who has no pity for the tears of little children or the sobs of widowed mothers, and who is prepared to hack his way to victory and the ultimate over-lordship of the world. Long years of peace and security have lulled us into the comfortable delusion that there was something splendid in the notion of a hero who should be above the common race of men, and we had even come to talk lightly of pity and such kindred virtues as weaknesses from which the "strong man" should be exempt.

"You must leave the people through whom you march," said Bismarck, in his description of how warfare should be carried on, "only their eyes to weep with." And the German soldiery, forty years later, have carried out those orders only too faithfully. There is no occasion for me to recapitulate here the horrors which have filled columns of English and American dailies. It is my part to draw the moral from the tale of such atrocities as cannot be paralleled in the annals of civilised warfare.

Even now, I have found many people singularly slow to grasp the true significance of the deeds done in Belgium. I have spoken to people who, horrified though they are at the frightful stories of arson and murder perpetrated by the German troops, have merely seen in them a further argument against all form of warfare, and sometimes a dreadful commentary on the innate depravity of human nature. Such an attitude is hopelessly wrong. War, we know, cannot be waged with kid gloves, but even war, as conducted in a civilised age, may be waged with humanity. Our own men, I am proud to think, have shown that soldiers are not necessarily brutal or debased because they are fighting for their country. We must seek the explanation of the infamies perpetrated in Belgium and elsewhere, not in the madness or blood-lust suddenly overtaking an army enraged by resistance, but in that diabolical philosophy which has in these latter years usurped the place of Christianity and erected the image of the Superman on the altar of God Himself.

Never, I think, in the pages of history, has there been presented to us such a spectacle as that of Prussia justifying and exulting in the savagery displayed by its army in the field as proof of her own wonderful culture and civilisation. When Attila ravaged Europe with fire and sword, he did not plead that he was

spreading a higher culture among his victims. On the contrary, he called himself "the scourge of God." And if there have been other barbarian generals and armies who have equalled the ferocity of the Prussian soldiery, let it at least be recorded in extenuation of their misdeeds that they made no pretence to be other than they were.

That is not the case to-day. It is in the name of modern "culture" that the horrors of which we have read have been done. It is from Nietzsche, from Heine, from Häusser and from Treitschke that Germany derives her anti-Christian spirit. The Superman of to-day is the very antithesis of the Christ of Galilee. Openly and undisguisedly the Christian is contemned and the ideals of Christianity made a laughing-stock. Here is a lesson for us all, and we shall do well to consider to what a pass that country may be brought which rejects Christ and offers its worship to an ideal which the very Pagan would have looked upon with horror.

There has lately passed from among us one whose whole life was a witness to the truth of Christ's teaching, and who in his own person was the exact antithesis of the Nietzschean Superman. Pius X., as has been well said of him, was "by origin a peasant and by vocation a saint." The "culture" of German philosophy was denied him, yet in his own person he em-

bodied all those qualities with which all, save the followers of the doctrine of brute force, would endow their ideal Superman. He was called unwillingly to the highest and the most widespread sovereignty in the world; and his conduct in that high station, for which chiefly the saintliness and simplicity of his life had fitted him, elicited on his death a universal tribute of admiration and applause.

Here was an example—and the world was quick to recognise it—of the real Superman, and not the spurious brand which "culture" and "science," uncontrolled by religion, have set before us. Not the man of blood and iron, the ruthless bully who leaves his brethren "only their eyes to weep with," but the man of knighthood and chivalry, the man with the heart of a child, is the real Superman. On the blood-stained fields of Belgium we have seen the Nietzschean Superman in being. On the throne of St. Peter, incarnated in Pius X., we have had a supreme example of the Christian ideal.

We must return to the Sermon on the Mount. We must get back to the Teacher, and then we shall accept His teaching. Against the foul Superman of the Devil's imagining we must set up the knightly Superman of Christ's Gospel. The powers of darkness have unmasked themselves prematurely, and the hideousness of the revelation has appalled a world not yet so

utterly gone astray as to be unable to distinguish between brute force and moral power, between vice and virtue, between devilry and sanctity.

The anti-Christian Superman has declared in his arrogance that he will re-map Europe, that nothing less than the Empire of the world will content him. It is for a re-mapped Europe that we, too, are fighting. We must crush for ever under our heel the pestilent serpent, whose poisonous breath would paralyse all the noblest and most spiritual aspirations of mankind. And in this most righteous crusade against the enemies of all which we, as Christians, hold dear, it should hearten us to bear in mind that we are fighting, not only for home and children, for country and empire, but for truth and honour, for justice and freedom, in a word, for all that is loftiest and holiest in Christian civilisation.

Such is our conviction, and though we can scarcely dare to hope that the enemy will give us credit for it, we do proclaim to the whole world that we are, in this warfare, actuated by no feelings of hatred against the German people, but rather against those false ideals advocated in the Heidelberg School and taught by Häusser and Schlosser, and extolled by Treitschke and his following as the only ones worthy to-day of "the civilised and cultured German Empire."

II.—His Creed

We have seen only too clearly to what depths of unspeakable depravation the Nietzschean Superman, resting on himself alone, must inevitably sink. The Christian virtues are for him something worse than signs of weakness; they rank indeed as crimes in the code of his "master-morality." And even such natural human emotions as pity and love are to him anathema. Now of all the qualities—or rather absence of qualities—which go to make up the frozen semblance of man which we have been asked to bow down before and worship, the lack of love is, I think, the most horrifying and repulsive.

What is there stronger on earth, what is there sweeter or grander, what is there loftier or holier, what is there greater or more divine in its essence than love? Love—divine love—is the vital principle of the Christian soul. And the man, whose soul is without it, may as well draw down the blinds and go into mourning at once for his spiritual death. "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor," says St. Paul, "and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Perfect, according to his own code, the Nietzschean Superman may be; perfect, that is to say, in his relentless application of all

the devilish designs of his master, Satan, but it is a "dead perfection," such as that of which the poet speaks. It is not God, as he pretends, who is dead. It is he himself who is living a hideous death-in-life.

Is there anything greater than the love of a mother for her child? I only know one thing, the love of God for us, and all that He asks us in return is that we shall give Him such love as we are capable of. And for that we must become as little children, we must trust ourselves wholly to Him and get rid of every atom of that terrible pride, that appalling self-sufficiency which stamps the Nietzschean super-monster.

Moral and mental shipwreck, as these past days of trial have taught us, is the inevitable fate of all who think they can do without God and set up their own law in opposition to His. Man is but a child, and needs, as does all else in nature, a prop to lean upon. That is the lesson which God Himself came down to earth to teach us. And does not the active anti-Christianity of the spurious Superman clearly prove to us where that same support is to be found? Where else but on the strong arm of the Son of God?

Of a truth, if we do our part, we are all destined to be supermen, and more than supermen, some day. But we cannot reach the starry heights without long and patient training. The

most daring of our airmen has had to undergo an arduous and wearisome apprenticeship before being permitted to leave the earth and soar, like a bird, into the stainless blue. For us, too, a day of release will come, when if we have laboured well, we shall be permitted to exchange the monotony of our training here for the boundless freedom and joy of the heavens. And if we fail to learn our lesson, it will be our own folly and sloth that we must blame.

We are here, then, to work, to realise our mission, to make some return, however inadequate, for the love poured forth upon us by our Father and Creator. Not for us is that shallow philosophy which would persuade us that life is ours to do with it as we please. Let us remember that in the exact proportion that we forget our God, so do we approach nearer the frightful ideal of the diabolical Superman. And the harder we find it to escape being carried along the current in company with those who are only living for the passing show of this world, the more need there must be for us to put all our faith and trust in the strong arm of Christ.

"Come to me all ye that labour," said Our Lord, and that invitation He is still repeating to-day. He will give us what we need. He will supply us with a strong arm on which to lean. He will open to us a treasure-house in His heart on which we can draw, and in His

countenance we shall see that which will uplift us and inspire us with an ambition commensurate with the high destiny to which He calls us.

Not long since a man called upon me to tell me of his misfortunes. He was—or had been—one of fortune's favourites, who had never had to do a day's work in his life. But through a stroke of hard luck he had lost nearly every penny he possessed. He told me his tale, and added, "Father, you will still be welcome at my table, but you will have to bring with you what you want to eat, for I shall only be able to give you a knife and fork."

I asked him what he was going to do. "Going to do?" he cried, "I am going to work. The gate beyond the stars is not shut yet. As long as the gate is open and the Master is on the doorstep, I can face and push through my troubles and difficulties." So, with the energy and enterprise of a true Englishman, who does not know when he is beaten, this man, instead of folding his arms and bewailing his fate, rose upward for the first time in his life, put his shoulder to the wheel, and now, in the popular phrase of the day, he is "making good." Why? Because, as he told me when last I saw him, he felt that he had Christ behind him. Trust in Jesus Christ, that is the whole of our faith.

"Come to Me, all ye that are heavy

burdened." Burdened! We are all burdened, and at the present moment we are bearing a heavier burden of grief and anxiety than, perhaps, has ever been our lot before. Shall we find the courage and strength to bear that burden in ourselves alone? The Superman pretends that he can do so, by stripping what he calls his soul of every kindly human emotion, of all sympathy with his fellows, of every feeling of love towards God or his neighbour. And what is the result? Instead of becoming something more than man, instead of striking his head against the stars, he sinks into a state which is below that of the brute creation.

It is only by leaning upon Christ that we can reach the stature of the true Superman, no matter in what dustbin of the world we are grovelling. The weakest of us can become more than a match for the super-beast, if we are content to rely on the divine force that is freely at the disposal of such as ask for its help.

> "For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."
>
> (Tennyson)

That is the secret of the saint—the power of prayer. What resource has the Nietzschean Superman when his doctrine of brute force fails? Or even should it, for a time, seem to

succeed, what can his "culture" avail him when he stands face to face with an outraged God?

Why, in that devastating first month of the war when the Superman, faithful to his brutal creed, was carrying fire and sword through violated Belgium, and wreaking his blind rage on innocent women and children; when, through sheer force of numbers, he was driving back the allied armies farther and farther into France, why, in those dark days, were our hearts still high, why were we still so confident that our cause would prevail? Was it not because our consciences were clear, because, in other words, whatever our errors and shortcomings may have been, we still put our trust in the God of Righteousness? Many and grievous have been the faults of this nation in the past, but we have at least kept ourselves free from that worst crime of all—the blasphemous pretence of making ourselves the equals of God.

The knights of old fought not the less stoutly because their faith was as the faith of little children. Nor have our gallant soldiers and sailors proved themselves any the less brave because they can feel pity for a fallen foe, and because they wage no war on helpless women and babes in arms.

Ruthlessness is no proof of courage, nor need we wait for posterity to emphasise the difference

between the barbarous spectacle of the sacking of Louvain and the picture of our sailors rescuing their drowning enemies under the fire of the German guns.

Manliness, bravery and sportsmanlike pluck we can all admire wherever we find them, and we are proud to acknowledge the fine traits of all these qualities in the captain of the *Emden* which, for many weeks, gave us so many surprises on the high seas, till at length she was herself surprised, and her little games of hide-and-go-seek were finally stopped by the Australian cruiser *Sydney*. England is proud to honour a foe such as Captain von Müller of the German Navy.

IV

GOOD OUT OF EVIL

THERE are people, short-sighted perhaps, but entirely sincere, who are so impressed with the horror of warfare that they have come to regard war as the worst of all evils. On the material side they point to the physical want and misery that must overtake thousands and hundreds of thousands of innocent non-combatants; to the financial ruin that must overwhelm so many hitherto happy and peaceful homes; to the sorrow and grief that the deaths of the best and most vigorous of the country's manhood must cause to those who are left behind. On the moral side there are even stronger arguments put forward against war. Those who are actually fighting, it is maintained, tend to become brutal and callous by the habit of slaughter. Repelled at first by the awful scenes of bloodshed they are forced to witness, their higher nature eventually becomes atrophied, their animal instincts get the better of them, and they finally degenerate to the level of the beasts of the field which know neither pity nor mercy.

That is one side of the picture, and so power-

fully does it appeal to a certain class of mind that we come across not a few people who will tell us that it is better to endure anything rather than suffer war to come, and that nothing can justify one nation declaring war upon another. "Peace at any price" is their motto, and perhaps they are to be pitied rather than blamed for their one-sided attitude. For hateful as war is, terrible as are its material, and sometimes its moral, consequences, we must not make the mistake of believing it to be always criminal.

War is an evil—who denies it? But so are many other things, and the chief of these is sin. But that is just the point, the peace apologists will eagerly interrupt, war is the greatest of sins. So it may be, if it is a war waged for no other motive than ambition or aggression. But when the choice is presented to a nation of waging a just war in self-defence, in a good and sacred cause, or of giving up all its ideals of honour, of courage, and of righteousness, would it not be a worse sin for that nation to refuse the gage of battle and to hold aloof in a cowardly panic from the stricken field?

War, I repeat, is an evil, one of the greatest of evils, but like any other evil, if it be met in the right spirit, much good may come of it. Wellington once said there was nothing more appalling in war than victory, except defeat. But if the horrors of war are not to be denied, war also provides opportunities for bringing forth

much that is best and noblest in man's nature. I am not only thinking now of the bravery that may be shown in battle, or even of the small things we at home can do, the little sacrifices we can make to help those who are fighting far away at the front. These things we take as a matter of course, and if we could not count on them we should indeed be a decaying nation, morally and in every other way.

But greater benefit can and should be extracted from a war such as we have been forced into than a mere temporary exaltation of the emotional side of our nature. While this war lasts we may fight valiantly, we may endure steadfastly, we may suffer all things with patience, so that, when the end comes, we may have the right to claim that we have quitted ourselves like men. That will be something to our credit and to the credit of our great Empire. But it will not be enough. It is when the war is finished, when we have fought through to victory, that the test will come. For it is then that we shall have to show, by an altered mode of life, by an altogether worthier practice of ideals, that in the fire of battle the dross has been shaken out of the gold, and that we have awakened to a real and lasting knowledge of the relative value of the things that are prized by the world.

Let us admit that for the moment, and under the stress and strain of a great crisis, we are doing our duty, and shall continue to do our duty,

splendidly, gloriously, while the crisis lasts. But when the stress is over, when the strain is relaxed, then will come the temptation to fall back into the old habits, the old thoughts, the old carelessness, to forget the Power that sustained us during the struggle, and to become more than ever immersed in selfish schemes of personal success.

Thus if we hope to extract good from evil, we must look to it that, when the war is ended, there must be no sinking back into a comfortable slumber. It will not do for us to breathe a sigh of relief at the thought that we have done our duty and that there are no further duties awaiting us. For it is then that we shall most need to keep alive the spirit of brotherhood and of altruism which, I venture to think, the war has, for the moment at least, evoked, to our own legitimate pride, the admiration of the world.

There are many wrongs which need righting in this fair land of ours. To some of them I have referred in the following pages. The war has already produced many examples of Christian charity, of brotherly kindness, of self-sacrifice and of devotion to duty. It has dissipated, as perhaps nothing else could have dissipated, the antagonism of classes, it has drawn together men of all parties and all creeds; and it has, I rejoice to believe, taught many to understand something of their dependence upon a higher Power. These things are all to the good, but to be of

any value they must be permanent. The spirit that has hushed party strife, that has silenced the Suffragette, that has taught the Socialist wisdom — is this spirit to flicker out when the booming of the guns no longer sounds in our ears?

I trust not. I hope not. But it is a matter that has got to be faced, and it should be faced now, in this time of national peril. It is not my wish to underrate the qualities that, as a nation, we have shown in our day of trial. But we must beware of slipping back when the danger is past. We must be on our guard against false pride, which is one of the deadliest of sins. Nor must we yield to the temptation of feeling that, having shown ourselves equal to the occasion, nothing more is reasonably to be expected of us.

Our real mission will only then be beginning. God asks us to give Him of our best no less in peace than in war, in times of prosperity as well as in times of adversity. Let us not forget that it is often easier to be courageous in face of a sudden emergency than to do our duty consistently throughout the monotonous daily round. As it is with individuals, so it is with nations. We have faced—and we are facing—this international crisis with stout hearts and with all that is best in us. And I doubt not we shall find strength to endure nobly and generously till the end. But when that peril is past—and God grant it may not be too long drawn-out

—we shall be faced with the equally pressing duty of putting our own house in order. That duty, indeed, has always been waiting performance. But never shall we have such a golden opportunity of accomplishing it as that which, if all goes well, will be granted us in the not distant future.

It is that day which we should try to bear in mind. It is that day to which we should be looking, not altogether as a welcome end to our present troubles, but as the beginning of a new era in our social relations, the new dawn of a finer national life, the new age of freedom and truth, a new chapter in the story of religion. If the war shall have aroused us to a confession of our own past shortcomings in this respect and to a firm determination to remedy them in the future, it will, I venture to affirm, have done us more good than a hundred years of peace. May it bring us peace, lasting peace, with God, with our neighbour, with ourselves.

V

WAR AND RELIGION

BEFORE the war came, many people were very busy proclaiming that whoever ventured to hint at the possibility of a German invasion was a false prophet, an alarmist; they all knew better than he did that war never would, and never could, come. Apart from those who argued on economic grounds, on which I do not pretend to be an authority, the chief reason advanced for the impossibility of war ever again being waged on the Napoleonic scale seems to have been that such a war would be too brutal and too appalling to be tolerated by an advanced civilisation like ours. It would be "unthinkable." Well, so it is "unthinkable" in one sense, but, for all that, it has come, and the fallacy of believing that it never could come lay in the meaning we attach to the words "civilisation" and "culture."

We have talked so much and written at such length about this wonderful modern civilisation of ours that, I verily believe, most of us have been persuaded, or have persuaded ourselves, that the human race has really reached

a moral and intellectual altitude hitherto unattained in the history of mankind. The fact of the matter is that our "progress," to use another cant phrase of the day, has been very largely of a material description. Thanks chiefly to the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century, life has been made far more comfortable and luxurious for us than at any previous period, and so we have been led, by a sort of false analogy, to believe that we are as superior, on the moral side as on the material, to all the past civilisations of which we have any record.

Perhaps the humble searching of heart which the war must surely produce in the national conscience may help us to realise the great fact that human nature changes but little from age to age, and that the greatest material prosperity is no sure guarantee of a correspondingly conspicuous morality. Elsewhere in this book I have emphasised the point that all reform, whether social or moral, must start with the individual, and in the same way I would here urge my readers to remember that a civilisation can only be called great or splendid, in the true sense of the words, precisely in proportion to the right thinking and the right living of the individuals composing it.

This notion that a European war was an impossibility was somewhat on a par with that other fallacy, that you can make people good

in the bulk by Acts of Parliament, and that morality is something distinct from religion. When we are all angels, war, without doubt, will disappear from the earth. So will every other crime and vice which now disfigures our erring humanity. But, believe me, civilisation alone will never effect this miracle. On the contrary, civilisation — alas, that it should be so! — tends to make men more and not less vicious, more and not less inclined to pursue the pleasures and grip the prizes of the world.

I have frequently come across people holding the comfortable theory that a Christian civilisation cannot possibly be permitted by the Almighty to pass away as the old heathen empires passed away. Such people can have studied history to little purpose if they really believe that Christianity depends upon civilisation, or that because a nation dubs itself Christian, it has thereby a vague claim to immunity against the attacks of a vigorous enemy. The Church of Christ cannot perish—we have the words of Our Lord that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against her—but we have no guarantee that civilisation, as we know it, may not be utterly wiped out, leaving no trace behind. The conversion of Rome to Christianity did not save that mighty Empire from falling before the onset of the Goths and the Vandals, nor did Christendom in the Middle

Ages always wage a very successful war against the hosts of Islam.

The true Christian gives of his best to God, but he does not expect to be paid by God in this world's coin. And if adversity comes his way, whether on a large or small scale, he welcomes it as an opportunity for his spiritual advancement, not as a reason for reproaching his Creator for withholding His blessings. Job is an example of the way in which the devout Christian should meet the reverses of fortune, and the man who, professing Christianity, is not prepared to submit patiently to the will of God in all things, has not yet learned the true meaning of his religion.

When the whole world has become Christian in thought and act as well as in name, when, that is to say, each individual is striving to act up to the fine ideals put before us by Our Lord, then and then only shall we have a right to think of war as impossible. It comes, therefore, to this, that we must, each one of us, strive whole-heartedly and with full endeavour to lead truly Christian lives, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of the world at large. Only in this way, and not by any loud talk about the Christianity of the age, can we really hope to make the Christian spirit alive and vigorous.

The fashion, then, of denouncing war as a crime against civilisation, against culture,

against modern humanitarianism, is futile and meaningless. War may be, nay, it undoubtedly is, an offence against these things. But this is not the chief or the real reason why, as the Peace Society resolutions say, it "ought to be abolished." Before you can abolish war, you must abolish the equally detestable things that are done every day in times of peace, you must set the foundations of society firmly and securely upon the rock of religion, and you must teach every child to know and recognise that there are greater things in life than the pursuit of material profit.

Let us clear our minds, then, of the stupid fallacy that civilisation or culture can of themselves ever prevent or abolish war. Christianity alone can do that. And if I am asked why it has not succeeded in doing so during the last thousand years, my answer is that the fault is to be found not in Christianity, but in the frailty of poor human nature. Such a statement will, I know, be unwelcome to those who have got into the habit of denying the inherent sinfulness of mankind, who believe that intellect is a sufficient substitute for religion, and who affirm that a purely ethical ideal can be constructed on a non-spiritual basis. Such people will say that this is pessimism, pure and simple, and shows too profound a disbelief in the possibilities of human nature. To which one can only reply that human nature, unaided by the

Divine, never progresses very far along any but the most grossly material lines. All that civilisation, divorced from religion, can do in the way of averting or abolishing war, is to breed a race which will never have the hardihood to fight for its existence, and which, preferring its own ease and comfort to all considerations of honour and freedom, must inevitably decay and perish of its own inherent vices.

Whether war will, in the distant future, ever be banished from this earth it is not for me to prophesy. But I make bold to say that, before you can abolish war, you will have to abolish sin, you will have to recognise that civilisation is not a matter of culture alone, and you will have so to order affairs that vice and crime of every description shall be utterly rooted out of men's lives. Is that an impossibility? It may be. But it is a condition precedent to the abolition of war.

Let us cease from arming, say some, and war will automatically stop. But armaments are an effect, not a cause. If I know that armed burglars are prowling round my house, ready to attack me at the earliest opportunity and with the avowed intention of shooting at sight, prudence demands that I should purchase a revolver in self-defence. I may, it is true, hope to convert the burglars before the worst comes to the worst, but meanwhile I must make ready to repel them by force, for

arguments alone may not turn them from their purpose. If universal disarmament ever comes by consent, we shall be justified in rejoicing, not on account of the fact itself, but because it will be an indication that the peoples of the world will have reached a frame of mind permitting them to lay aside their mutual fears and jealousies. Talk of a general disarmament, therefore, is idle till religion has done its work. And since religion acts on nations through individuals, we come back to the same point, namely, that it is by individual effort alone that the world can be regenerated.

But though it is difficult to imagine a world without war, just as it is difficult to imagine a world without sin and sorrow and suffering, we must not fall into the opposite error of believing that war is a necessary evil. Few evils in the world are necessary. Man's free will may be exerted towards abolishing all sin, all crime, and all evil just as readily as it is now, alas! so often used in promoting them. It is for us to strive towards the Ideal, even though we may never in this world win to the vision of the Holy Grail. And this lesson at least let us hope the war will bring home to us — that the closer we cling to Christ, the more faithfully we obey His precepts and the more unfalteringly we follow in His footsteps, the nearer we shall get to that great conception of Universal Brotherhood which He was never

tired of preaching to His disciples and to the world.

Do not let us, with history, sacred and profane, before our eyes, condemn all warfare as unjust and unnecessary. While we recognise that war is a cleansing fire, out of which good often comes, let us not forget that also out of plague and pestilence, pit disasters and railway accidents God often draws good. But we do not, in consequence, pray that these calamities may happen. On the contrary, in the great Litany, we pray to be delivered from them. That prayer will not be lost. In the event of it not averting the calamity, it will win us the grace and strength of bearing up under it as sons of God.

VI

"A SCRAP OF PAPER"

Some of my friends on this and on the other side of the Atlantic write asking me if Christianity has collapsed altogether that we should be witnessing in the centre of so-called Christian civilisation wholesale murder, wanton vandalism and fiendish atrocities? "The sights presented to us to-day in Europe," they contend, "just strip the Churches and their ministers of all spiritual significance." They ask: "Upon what plea and with what excuse do you followers of Jesus, meek and humble of heart, unsheath your sword, when He bade Peter fling his aside even when it was drawn in the defence of his Master?" I answer: "One cannot argue from the Gospel in favour of peace any more than in support of war. The Son of Man came with a sword, as well as with peace to men of goodwill. He came to establish the reign of justice, to which peace may be a hindrance and war a help, such is human perversity. We must look to the causes which have led up to the world-war before we can justify one side or the other engaged in a life-and-death struggle."

When an armed burglar breaks into your own

or your neighbour's house you have every right, though you profess to be a Christian, to repel him, even should you by so doing slay him in his wanton aggression. And should you be assailed on a journey by a highway robber you would indeed be made of poor and paltry stuff were you to yield to his demand: "Your money or your life!" No, as a man and a Christian you would fight for your own, nor would you feel any qualm of conscience if in the hand-to-hand encounter your aggressor lost his life.

What is ethically right in the case of an individual defending himself against an aggressor is equally justified when the case is transferred from the unit to the State made up of units. The State has a right, nay a duty, to defend her autonomy, integrity, and independence against any armed force that uses its strength to invade its territory and to sack and burn it. It must repel forceby force or else fail in its mission as the safeguard of the temporal interests of its members.

You ask me: Why are the Allies now at war, or, more particularly, why is peace-loving, law-abiding England armed as never she was before? Well, Germany would say we were fighting on account of "a scrap of paper," and that our only motive for doing so was envy of her and of her place in the sun. Freely I acknowledge it was "a scrap of paper" which cast the die and caused the declaration of war upon Germany. But for-

get not that while "a scrap of paper" may be less than nothing it may also be more than words can measure. "A scrap of paper," bearing my signature, may give away all I possess; "a scrap of paper" with the Bank of England at its back may entitle me to draw a million pounds sterling across its counter; "a scrap of paper" with the name of England emblazoned on it may stand for more than all her wealth, and all her possessions —it may stand for her word of honour. England's word is her bond. You may call the Charter of our liberties "a scrap of paper," you may say the great American Constitution is only "a scrap of paper," nay, that the Gospel itself is only "a scrap of paper." But what if that scrap of paper be a nation's bond, or the Word of God? Make no mistake about it, an international treaty with Britain's signature to it can be regarded in one light only, as a vital and sacred contract. After the contract of marriage I can conceive of none other more binding, solemn and sacred than such a treaty.

What was this particular treaty for which the right place according to Germany was the waste-paper basket? It was a contract signed in 1839, and confirmed in 1870, guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. Prussia, France and England lent their names to this scrap of paper, and pledged their word to abide by its provisions and observe its terms. Behold here the sort of "scrap of paper" for which England was prepared to go

to war. Belgium relied on that scrap of paper for her security and independence. France relied on it as a strong rampart on her northern frontier, and England relied on it as her friends' guarantee making for lasting peace with industrial progress. It was unthinkable that Germany would have dreamt of tearing up a treaty to which she had put her signature, and it was impossible for England to believe that she herself could be asked to look on with folded arms while Prussian troops were invading Belgium's neutral territory; because forsooth it happened to be the nearest way for them to reach Paris. Yet, before diplomatists could debate the question, the Kaiser's columns had already crossed the border, on their way, as they thought, to haul down the tricolour in the French capital. Under the circumstances was there any way but one for England to act, was there open to her any course but the one which without flinching she actually did take? England declared war on Germany because consistently with her word of honour and code of morality she could do nothing else. Let anyone who calls her action in question read the White Paper. After perusing that diplomatic correspondence you arrive at one conclusion only—that England was quite as keenly bent on peace as Germany was determined on war. How could England stab gallant little Belgium in the back, how could she come to terms with the Prussian War-Lord who wanted

to strike a bargain with us, and actually did make us an "infamous proposal"! Had England acted otherwise than she did, not only would she have been scorned and condemned by the whole civilised world as a cringing coward, a word-breaker and a traitor to her friends, but she herself would have been conscious that her treacherous conduct had deserved every drop of the vitriol poured out upon her.

Thank God, England rose to the occasion, counted the cost, and resolved that, even should her treasury of gold and of men be spilt and exhausted in the terrible struggle, she would fight for honour, truth and freedom to the end. From one end of the Empire to the other the cry went forth: "With God's help we will fight this war to the finish, we shall see it out to the end." England's sword has been drawn in a sacred cause; ours is a crusade against an insolent and aggressive foe who, if he is determined to reset the map of Europe and to reconstruct the nations thereof, may rest assured that we too are equally determined to resist him to the last. We pray that out of this world-wide war, black as night, there may arise the dawn of a day promising the cessation of colossal armaments by land and sea, and in their stead the advent of an era of Christian peace for the Christian peoples of Europe. Nothing but a war such as this in which the nations of Europe are now engaged can bring peace to its people who, for the past generation, have been menaced by a foe who declares it is

Prussia's mission to Pan-Germanise the world. Just as Belgium stood in Prussia's way to Paris, so England stands in her way to world-conquest. England must either get out of the way or be got out of the way for the Prussian forces, whose rallying cry is: "World dominion or death!"

No man can read Nietzsche or Treitschke or Bernhardi and any longer doubt what this terrible war means. It means a life-and-death struggle against Prussian domination, Prussian religion and Prussian civilisation. In Cramb's lectures on Germany and England, which are the best commentary on Bernhardi's exposition of Germany's aims and ambitions, we are told that German professors and German generals and German ministers of the new religion are united in their determination to set up a world-empire inspired with a world-religion—the religion of valour, with brute-force for its gospel. "And what is the religion," asks the Professor of Modern History, "which, on the whole, may be characterised as the religion of the most earnest and fashionable minds of young Germany? What is this new movement? The movement, the governing idea . . . . is the wrestle of the German intellect not only against Rome but against Christianity itself. Germany at least shall not confront the twentieth century and its thronging vicissitudes as the worshipper of an alien God, thrall of an alien morality. Her war-god shall be Odin, not Christ. Ye have heard men say,

Blessed are the peacemakers: but I say unto you, Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jahve, the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve."

I might continue to cite passages from this modern school dominating Prussian thought, but I have said more than enough to show what kind of brute-force we are up against in this slaughter-house war. As brute-force is the antithesis of moral-force, so are the Prussian and the Allies' interests opposed each to each.

Far be it from me to imply that the whole of the German race is inspired by Prussian aims and ambitions. The Catholics of Germany, the Catholics of the Rhine provinces, of Bavaria, Westphalia and Prussia itself are surely, among the children of the Church, the most thorough in their Christian principles, and the best instructed and most devout. Them we admire and reverence for their loyalty and all that makes up Christian heroes and heroines. They, indeed, have our sympathy, for we recognise that to them, if they ever hear of them, must be abhorrent the methods of warfare with with their soldiers are associated. Dropping down from the heavens above bombs that strike unoffending citizens and shatter their dwellings, and sowing with infernal mines the neutral seas, are methods of procedure which call for the condemnation of the whole Christian world. Nor can any sane person condone the wanton destruction

of Louvain University, or the shelling and defacing of Rheims Cathedral. These are crimes crying to heaven for vengeance, they are crimes against history and posterity, as well as against the Christian dispensation of Christ Our Lord. Beside this, Germany, with its barbarism, atrocities, and incendiarism, which has "disguised fair nature with hard-favoured rage," there is the Germany of music, of culture, of science, of art, and of life pastoral and devotional. We distinguish carefully between the two sections of the same community—we love the one as much as we hate the other.

At present our sword is drawn against the Germany under the sway of the Nietzsche and Treitschke school of philosophy, against the Germany of blood and iron, savagery and barbarism. We are united with our Allies to save Christian civilisation from the fate of Louvain and Rheims —to protect our homes and universities from falling a prey to the vandalism of these modern Vandals and Huns. We look up and around, and as we see our island home girdled with its cathedrals, abbeys and minsters, our thoughts instinctively turn to what would happen to these temples of Peace were they to be exposed to a fate such as has ruined one of Christendom's most cherished shrines. Away with such nightmares, they must not even be dreamt of in one's wildest dreams. On the contrary, let us look forward to the day when this world-encounter will be at an end, when

Europe shall wake up to feel once more that she may breathe and dwell in an atmosphere of peace, when monster armaments shall be like a bad dream, with no further reality, when the Allied Forces will be able to guarantee autonomy, integrity and independence to small states that had been forced to surrender their freedom at the dictation of tyrant forces astride Europe and dominating it.

Can you conceive a nobler work than that to which we find ourselves, under the providence of God, committed? What loftier or holier mission can there be on this earth than to protect the weak against the strong, to uphold truth and honour against falsehood and slander, and to build up once again with Christ and for Christ, on the ruins of barbarism and savagery, His saving civilisation?

Of course, we do not expect the German people to take the same view as ourselves of the present terrible situation, they no doubt consider we are as wrong as we are persuaded we are right in our verdict on the war. We give them credit for their estimate of the present state of affairs, but this will not absolve us from the solemn and sacred duty of placing before our readers England's justification for engaging in a war which is turning our dear country into a house of mourning.

VII

THE RED CROSS

At the best of times this world is very largely a battlefield, whereon mankind is ceaselessly waging war against suffering, disease, and death. And at a moment like the present, there is no need to draw out the analogy, and our hearts are stricken with anguish as the long lists of the dead and wounded bear grim witness to the dreadful reality of the metaphor, we owe a special debt of gratitude to those brave non-combatants who are fighting under the flag of the Red Cross.

War does not lessen, it only increases, their work of mercy. And for my part I feel that, deeply grateful as we all must be to those heroic souls who tend our wounded and soothe the last moments of our dying soldiers, we do not sufficiently realise the full immensity of our obligations to them. In a time of national stress, it seems natural that each of us should take our share in lightening the burden that lies heavily on the shoulders of all. There are plenty of willing workers, anxious to do all in their power to help. But—and this is the point I

wish to emphasise—the measure of our usefulness is limited by the degree to which we have trained ourselves to be ready against the appointed day. To the Red Cross workers, therefore, our thanks are due, not merely or even chiefly for the patience, the readiness, and the devotion with which they tend and nurse our wounded soldiers back to health, but far more for the self-sacrifice they have shown in devoting their lives beforehand to the hard and rigid discipline, the long hours of severe training, without which they could never have become competent to perform that gracious work, than which no corporal act of mercy is to be accounted higher in the sight of God and man.

I cannot speak more strongly than I feel upon the real heroism of the Red Cross workers, that quiet, unobtrusive, long-enduring heroism, which only catches the public eye for a moment, as it were, when it shows forth lit up by the angry light of the fires of the battlefield. Little enough do we reck, in normal times, of that multitude of peaceful fighters whose sole care in life is to sustain the suffering, to nurse the sick, and to tend the fallen. We take it for granted, somehow, in our careless, selfish fashion, that there will always be some willing to undertake the duties for which each one of us should, I think, fit ourselves in some measure. The coming of this war has brought home to us, as nothing else could have done, the duty that lies upon every citizen

so to train himself in peace time that he may be able, if called upon, to render efficient and effectual aid in the defence of the country and the Empire. Yet great as is the admiration with which, in war time, we hail the work of the Red Cross, and necessary as we admit this help to be, I doubt if it has occurred to many that it is just as necessary for every woman to be trained to some extent in the profession of nursing, as it is for every man to be taught to use a rifle and to know something of the elements of drill.

In that other comparatively insignificant war in which we were engaged more than a dozen years ago, many noble hearted women rushed to the front to offer their services in helping to nurse the wounded. They acted from the best of motives, but they were practically useless, for nursing is a science, and, like every other science, must be acquired by a long and hard apprenticeship. There is no royal road to service under the Red Cross, nor can anyone effectively take up the works of charity and mercy, at a moment's notice, without having fitted oneself for the task.

That lesson has been preached to mankind for thousands of years, but how few have ever taken it to heart! And we of this generation have been no wiser than our fathers before us. Let us be frank and acknowledge the truth. We have done much, I know, in the matter of giving money. England, I am proud to think,

has ever had her ears open to the cry for help from the hovels of her great centres of industry. The hospitals of the country have been supported in magnificent fashion by voluntary effort, and the work that they have been able to do in consequence has been of incalculable value. But the fact remains that we have left the hardest part—the personal service—to that small band of devoted and self-sacrificing women, whose sole reward is in the doing of their works of charity and mercy. If only for the discipline of it, every man should be drilled how to fight as every woman ought to be trained how to nurse. If this only had been so, what a treasury of men and money would have been saved to England to-day. Foresight is not our strong point.

It is good for the discipline of our souls to move among the sick in the wards of the hospitals or infirmaries, or in slumland, "where a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead." It is by the bedside of the sick man and child that lessons in courage and patience are learned. Till we make a practice of visiting the sick it is difficult for us to get a sense of proportion. Till we set up our own crosses beside those borne by others, it is impossible to realise that our own sufferings are not quite the worst and certainly not the least deserved.

This is why I want all Englishmen, and particularly Englishwomen, to realise the true meaning of the symbol of the Red Cross. It

is a banner under which we all, no matter what our ordinary avocation may be, can enlist. We may not be able to give up our whole time to its call, but we can at least become not unworthy followers of all that it stands for. Sooner or later the war will end, but there can be no end to that other war against suffering and disease. And in this never-ending struggle the emblem of the Red Cross must stand for us as a rallying point, or a signal-post pointing to the path along which our duty lies. I have on another page pointed to the consoling fact, that great as are the horrors, and terrible as is the curse, of war; yet even out of such a war as this good may come if we open our ears and our hearts to receive, in a humble and a chastened spirit, the lesson it has to teach and the message it has to bring us. But we must be ready to give up our false ideals of comfort, our false ideals of leisure, our false ideals of life itself. We must be prepared to throw overboard the lumber of useless cargo with which, during our years of peace and fancied security, we have burdened our ship almost to sinking point. We must get back to the realities of things. We must return to a harder, cleaner way of living. We must realise, in a finer, clearer vision, that common brotherhood of men of which we have talked so much and for which we have done so little. We must, in short, return to the principles laid down by Christ

for the better conduct of our own individual lives.

For the Red Cross is the symbol of Christ Himself. It is the symbol of compassion, one of the greatest of Christian virtues. The man who has compassion for his fellows will not be found wanting in much else. We are told in the Gospel story that Our Lord beheld the multitude and had compassion on them, and that He broke bread and gave it to them. He opened His eyes to see, He opened His heart to feel, He opened His hand to give. That must be our method of procedure. We cannot go on better lines in dealing with suffering humanity. And the more we come into contact, direct personal contact, with the sick and the suffering, the more fully we shall come to understand the meaning of the commandment to love our neighbour as ourself.

It was my privilege, not a year ago, to say a few words on behalf of the League of Mercy, an institution which has done an enormous amount of good in supporting our hospitals and helping the sick and the suffering in many ways. In future we must all become, whether formally or not, Leaguers of Mercy. We must recognise to the full the nature of the endless war in which we have also our part to play. We must not be shirkers in that fight, or deserters from the post to which the great Commander-in-Chief of all men has appointed us. We

must boldly face the enemy with the same spirit in which we are now facing the enemies of our country. We must not any longer shut our eyes to the unpleasant facts of life, or try to banish from our thoughts, as well as from our sight, the misery of so many of our fellow beings. We must look upon the world not as it might have been or as we choose to think it may be, but as it actually is.

God has not created this world to be man's final destiny. It is, at the best, but a sin-stained noviciate for that other land where there shall be no more sorrow and death. Not in trying to satisfy our own worthless desires for material happiness and pleasure shall we be preparing for the high destiny to which we are called. We must take a saner and more serious view. Remembering all it stands for, let us turn our eyes to the Red Cross, the cross consecrated by the sufferings of Christ Himself, and learn from that symbol of compassion the lesson we had well-nigh forgotten in the heedless days before our sudden and rude awakening.

I have said that the world to-day is largely a battlefield, on which besides the fighters and the fallen are the wounded and the dying. Here is the opportunity for the priest, the doctor, the surgeon, and the nurse, who, with ambulances and all the personnel and equipment of modern science, are quick to bring help and solace and comfort to our brave men

broken in the fight. The *Times* Red Cross Fund is lending a strong helping hand in this mercy work. The sum, which bids fair to reach £1,000,000, is contributed by representatives of all sections of the community.

VIII

SOWN IN TEARS

NEVER has our Empire shone forth so gloriously from her place in the sun as she does to-day; never have her sons responded so readily or so gladly to her appeal for recruits, never have they felt so proud of being members of her Empire, and never were they more stubbornly resolved to fight this sacred war to the finish. What an inspiring sight has been presented to us by our recruits rolling up in their 30,000 a day. They caught the cry: "Your King and Country need you," and forthwith the labourer dropped his hoe, the operative his spindle, the artisan his tool, the clerk his pen, the shopman his goods, the merchant his bills, the squire his sport and the courtier his place in order to join the colours and to serve in the ranks, ready to do and die in a life-and-death struggle for "Old England." Fancy a colonel dropping to the rank of second lieutenant so as to get sooner to the front! and a commander ready to start his career afresh in order to be in the fighting line! Who could have believed that our peace-loving, law-abiding people could have had such grit and sand in

them? Who could have conceived it possible that no sooner did they begin to realise that their King needed their personal services but forthwith without a murmur, without a second-thought, they "signed on," and went forth in what they stood, and with nothing else, to fall in and start a life altogether foreign to their taste and contrary to their instincts?

Often these men, accustomed to a cosy, comfortable and happy home, have found themselves in the first days of camp life subjected to hardships they had never even dreamed could have been their lot. Short commons, no change, no blanket has been their first experience of soldiering, and yet these same recruits have submitted to their trials with good-humoured joke and laughter, making the best of hard luck! Not only have our men experienced the bite of hunger and the snap of cold before they ever got into their khaki, but in the first weeks they had to go without the pay which ought to have purchased them some tinned food and tobacco. I found several camps where the first days of soldiering must have meant terrible privations to the men, but though they acknowledged they had been hit hard, they all seemed to recognise that the hardship was almost inevitable, and would not last long, and in spite of their privations they marched with a swing and a swagger which showed they were made of the right, tough stuff. We are not all of us heroes, and, if the recruiting

fell off sadly enough after the first weeks, the fault must not be charged on the people, but rather on the Press, which, by its posters implied the British were usually "victorious," while the Germans were "exhausted." Besides, at one time, some dissatisfaction was expressed with regard to the Government provision for the dependents of those at the front.

One Sunday morning, when a thousand men and more marched from near Wareham to Bindon Abbey, where I said Mass for them in the open amid the ruins of the old Cistercian minster, I was altogether enchanted with their appearance, their bearing, and their simple, childlike piety and devotion. When I stood upon an improvised platform and after Mass harangued the men garbed in all manner of turn-outs, a sea of faces was turned up towards me, and eyes aglow with expectation were fixed on me. With rapt attention these "Tommies" followed every word I said, tears, in many instances, streaming in the sunshine, down their sun-bronzed, boyish cheeks. I reminded them of the noble crusade against barbarism, butchery and incendiarism upon which they had entered; how the freedom of peoples and Christian civilisation itself lay in their hands; that it was a lay apostolate to which they had pledged themselves. The spirit of the men once serving under Nelson and Wellington, Havelock and Outram, Roberts and Kitchener, I saw reborn in the forces before me. They were out, as I

reminded them, to plunge into the thick of a world fight, and the flame of victory I could see already ablaze upon their brows. Let them remember Aisne, remember September 15th, when their brothers in arms withstood and repulsed a ten-times repeated attack hurled by the Prussian forces against them. Like an iron wall the Anglo-French stood their ground all that night, finishing their splendid stand with the capture of nearly a thousand prisoners and the prize of 60 mitrailleuse guns.

When my address was done these sons of the Empire, so reckless of life, light-hearted as boys, pressed around me with rosaries, medals and scapulars kneeling unabashed, and asking a blessing upon themselves and their objects of piety. Some gave me letters to post, others plucked a field flower from the abbey ruins, or pressed a photograph or picture-card into my hand, begging me to send them home to dear ones left behind.

It was all very touching and very simple and very sublime, because altogether very grand.

So far I have struck the brighter and lighter side of the picture, but we must not forget the shaded obverse aspect of the situation. To return from camps to homes is almost like passing from sunshine into darkness. Mothers, wives and daughters, all braver than their men, all braced up to do their duty, all struggling heroically to face what for them may be life torn from meaning, a great light quenched, and darkness to the end.

For with the life of every soldier fallen in battle there goes forth the cry:

"ALL IS DARK WHERE THOU ART NOT."

If not without emotion an outsider takes up the roll of honour in his morning paper, and reads down the list of the dead, the wounded, and the missing, picking out the names of those who are his friends or acquaintances, what must be the agony of anxiety with which a mother, wife, or child, awaits news from the War Office, which tells them of the fate of their dear ones at the front! To witness, as I have done, the breaking of hearts with the news of battles, has been almost more than one could bear. Little comfort to the young wife or widowed mother to be reminded that their dear one fell in a noble cause, a hero in the fight, a martyr for his country. What words have yet been forged in any language to heal a wounded heart, to dry up tears of blood? There is little or no comfort to be wrung out of the truest sympathy or to be drawn from the deepest devotion. When the sun of one's life has gone down, no language can dispel the gathering gloom about the widowed heart. When the prop on which one had learned to lean with all human strength has been withdrawn and shattered, what remains but to sink hopeless and helpless to the very earth?

Yes, there is one source of help, there is one strong hand that can lift the helpless, and one kind heart that can revive the hopeless. Jesus

Christ is here, yet, in our midst, and into the blind-drawn house He passes with the words still flowing from His sacred lips : "Come to Me all ye that labour and are heavy burdened"—He can and will comfort the bereaved and the sick at heart—virtue still goes out from Him, and strength is in His pathway. It is when all else fails that the Christian soul finds the truest and deepest meaning of the Christian religion. It is the religion of the Man of Sorrows, "Who hath borne our iniquities and carried our grief." When Jesus Christ first came on earth, He met Labour and his twin brother Sorrow, the offspring of Sin. With the sweat of His brow He baptised Labour and changed work from a curse into a blessing, and with the tears upon His cheeks, He baptised Sorrow, and changed sorrow from a penalty into a privilege. Since then, both Sorrow and Death have been as Angels guiding us from this vale of tears to a land where Sorrow shall be no more, nor Death any more. He, the Strong Son of the Strong God, has promised, when this shifting scene is done with, to wipe away every tear from our eyes. Meanwhile, we must betake ourselves to Him and plead at His sacred feet for strength to do and to bear His blessed will. We need, most of us, His chalice, and we must force ourselves to sip from it drops of that bitter draught which He drained to the dregs. Have courage, be of good cheer, daughter, for he who has gone before you, fallen in

battle, is already resting in peace, or awaiting you on the golden threshold, a Christian hero safely landed after his work was done. You, who believe in prayers for the dead, pour forth your hearts in humble but confident supplications for your heroes fallen with faces to the foe. Lift up your streaming eyes, and put forth your outstretched arms, asking God to help you to pursue your journey onward and upward till the curtains of night shall be drawn back, and the dawn of everlasting day arises before you. Before long this tiny arc out of the golden round of our eternal life shall be closed up, and we, even we, shall find Faith giving way to sight, Hope being more than realised, and Love and loved ones being all in all with the face-to-face vision of God in our happy-making Home. Then shall be fulfilled the promise that they who have "Sown in tears, shall reap in joy."

IX

PLAY THE GAME

THAT gallant, brave and heroic soldier, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, reminded us in his last days that this is no time for playing games. Emphatically it is not, but it is the time for drawing lessons from the games which have occupied so much of our leisure and absorbed so much of our money as well as our attention.

Of all the countries of the world, America and Britain are the two most devoted to outdoor sport, and whatever disadvantages this devotion to games entails, it at least has the solid benefit of improving the physique of a nation, and teaching us the value of self-reliance and self-restraint. Games train the limbs and senses of the body, give quickness to the eye, swiftness to the foot and increase the alertness, nimbleness and decision of the mind. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that games play an important part in character building.

But like other good things, games have been overdone, both in my own country and, I am sure many will agree, also in America. We have been living in a day when the questions of

gate-money and professionalism have entered far too deeply into what is, after all, merely physical and mental exercise of a high order. And it has come about that, in place of affording reasonable recreation to the whole youth of the nation, the actual playing of such games as football and baseball has been restricted to a comparatively small and highly paid body of professed experts, while the rest of the community have been content to look on and applaud their efforts.

The betting evil, too, which has followed as a natural consequence of the vicarious interest taken in such sport, has grown to enormous proportions. Games, therefore, have failed of late years in their true mission. They have not enlisted the bones, blood and sinews of the nation and sent them to fight for victory on our playing fields. And here, as I think, is food for serious thought, both for us who are now called to render an account of how we have borne ourselves in the fat days of peace, and no less for our great sister nation across the sea, which may profitably seize this moment for asking if all is well with them also in this respect.

However well we may understand the rules, the finer points, and the subtleties of a game, the mere watching of others taking part in it cannot benefit us in the slightest possible degree. We may applaud the skill, the coolness and the agility shown by the players, but that is no

sufficient preparation against the hour when we ourselves may be called upon to display in some measure the qualities which have evoked our enthusiasm for our peace-time heroes.

Perhaps the greatest of all the benefits conferred by any game is that elusive and indefinable quality known as "sportsmanship." If it were only for the sake of acquiring this excellent virtue I would have all boys and youths taught to delight in the actual playing of a game. We have got into the habit, due in large measure to the increase in the watching instead of the playing of games, of judging too much by results. There are people, I am credibly informed, who are made utterly miserable by the sight of their football or baseball club's defeat. Yet, rightly considered, the object of the game was not so much victory at all costs, but the good effect in those qualities I have already mentioned on the players. The real sportsman would far sooner be beaten in a terrifically close contest, whatever the nature of the game in which he is taking part, than form one of a side achieving a run-away victory over outclassed opponents, and still less share in a victory achieved by some form of dishonesty. It is the zest of the fight, not the joy of conquering, that gives, or ought to give, real pleasure. What does it matter whether we win or lose, if at the end of the game we can say that we have borne ourselves worthily during its progress?

It is this feeling, not yet crushed by the modern

development of games, which ranges us instinctively on the side of the "small nation" in the sterner affairs of life. The spectacle of Belgium, crushed and trampled under the heel of a ruthless invader, is a saddening one, yet the heroic resistance of that small country against an overpowering enemy has called forth the admiration and applause of the whole world. She has emphatically "played the game," and the real aim and object of our friendly and peaceful contests should be to teach us to "play the game" in other and sterner fights. Does anyone feel that Belgium, over-run though she be by innumerable hordes of invaders, has not gained an imperishable glory by the unequal struggle she has put up against overwhelming numbers? I think not. Belgium has at least "played the game," although the issue is nothing.

Out-door pursuits must inevitably be of more benefit to us both in body and soul than indoor recreations, which are more suited to the older amongst us. For every game is but a symbol of life, and a "bad loser," whether at golf, at bridge or at chess, will be a bad loser when things go wrong with him in the great game of life. If men and women would but steel themselves to accept defeat even in a game with a light heart and a pleasant smile, they would find it far easier to grapple with real troubles and real losses.

How many people does one hear ascribing all their woes and difficulties to ill luck! Yet there is in reality very little luck at all about the game of

life. One man may, it is true, be born into a higher position than another, with more favourable circumstances and with a more fortunate environment. But he is compelled no less than his poorer brother to " play the game " properly, or it will be the worse for him in the end.

Take the game of chess as an illustration of what I mean. The generic term for the pieces of all grades in this game is man. The men are kings, queens, bishops, knights and pawns. It is no special matter whether your mission is represented by the king, or the bishop, or the knight or the pawn, but it does matter very much indeed that you should play the character assigned to you to the best of your power. Your business is not to be conceited about your crown or your mitre, but to fulfil your part. When the game is done, all the men from king to pawn will be swept off the board into the same common wooden box, without distinction. All are made of the same stuff, all of the same wooden material. In origin and destiny we are all alike, but for the moment during our sojourn here we have to remind ourselves that he is the best servant of God, the noblest Christian, who fills most worthily the rôle allotted him in the scheme of things on God's earth, who, in short, has " played the game " to the full measure of his ability.

Once more, I may compare life to a game of cards, taking as my illustration the game that is rather too popular to-day—the game of bridge.

Some men play for love and declare a heart, others again are playing for riches and make diamonds their suit, while others play boldly for power and position and honours and then clubs are trumps. But no matter what call a man may make, he may be sure that in the end he will be over-called by a declaration of spades.

Spades will be trumps, perhaps sooner than most of us expect. When our unseen adversary outbids us with that call the question will be, have we played the game, have we been straight, have we revoked, have we made the best of every card in our hand, have we kept to the rules that should have guided our play? Life consists not so much in holding a good hand as in playing a bad one well. Grumbling at the lack of aces and kings in the hand dealt out to us will not avail us when the rubber is over and the points on either side are added up. For at the final reckoning we shall not be required to have achieved a grand slam without an ace in our hand, but rather to have made the best of the cards we have actually held. Once more, in fact, all that is asked of us is to "play the game."

And in such sports as football, baseball and cricket it is the same. We have to do our best in that particular station to which the captain assigns us. The pitcher or the bowler, if he has done his best, will not be blamed for the defeat of his side. Nor, if his skill is confined solely to pitching, to mastery of the ball, will he be ex-

pected to perform miracles in the way of making big hits and scoring runs for his team. A football forward does not necessarily make a good back, but in either case each man is expected to exert all his skill and his powers to the uttermost against the common foe.

So it is with life. We are all players, but each has his work set him to do, not to live for the senses, not according to the lust of the moment or the whim of the hour, but on the contrary to do all in his power to carry out with efficiency the work to which he is deputed by God, who deigns to need each one of us.

It is a sad reflection that in times of prosperity man is apt to neglect Almighty God. But such a dark night as that through which we are now passing, is God's opportunity. As children turn in their little troubles to their parents for help and comfort, so does man at such a time remember that there is always one unfailing Helper and Comforter at his side. All that He asks in return for His unstinted love and consolation is that we shall on our part, "play the game" manfully and nobly, and so in some small measure requite Him for His care and never-failing watchfulness over us. In these days there are many, hitherto neglectful, who are turning to Him for strength and courage. But while doing so in good hope that they shall not be disappointed, let them remember that it is for them, too, to play their part as He would have them play it, quitting themselves as men.

X

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

In St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle exhorts them to learn from their national games, of which they had good reason to be as supremely proud as they were passionately fond, a lesson full of practical significance. This is what he says: "Know you not that they who run in the race all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that you may obtain." (1 Cor. ix. 24.)

From almost mythical times Corinth had been famous for the Isthmian sports, as they were called from the isthmus on which the city was built. And, indeed, in no other part of Greece was there to be found a ground more favourably adapted by nature, as well as by art, for athletic sports, than that one which ran down the avenue of pine trees standing out so darkly against the snow-white statues which reared their heroic forms at regulated intervals along the whole length of the Corinthian race course. In this fine, fair city, sheltered by its citadel rock on the north-east, its shoreland washed by the great sea, assembled all Greece, with

the exception of the Spartans and Eleans, on occasion of these games in which so lively an interest was taken by all sections of that vast community.

For a moment let us pause and picture to ourselves the familiar scene to which St. Paul draws our attention in the passage of his letter we have been reading.

The stadium or race course, strewn with fine sand, running north and south of the pine grove, is thronged throughout its entire length with spectators raised tier above tier upon grand stands commanding an uninterrupted view of the well-laid race track. In the centre of the course, and half-way between starting-point and finish, there is placed the tripod on which may be seen the keenly contested prizes. What are they? Behold them: an unpretending garland of parsley and pine leaves, and beside it a freshly cut palm branch.

Presently a blare of trumpets proclaims that a race—the foot race—is about to open the national games. The competitors, lithe and supple, fresh from their anointing, step forth from the pavilion on which all eyes are bent. Follow them, my friends, see them as they take their stand at the starting post in attitude expectant of the signal to be gone. The flag drops, and these athletes, splendidly made, splendidly trained, and splendidly matched, bound forward over the sparkling floor. With flying feet, on and on and on they rush, so lightly touching the earth

that they seem to be borne on the wings of the very wind as they fly past the brilliant lines of spectators, who, leaning forwards from their seats, hold their breath in awful straining silence as they follow the chances of their favourites pressing onward to the goal. But who among such evenly matched competitors shall the winner be? Surely that must depend upon some lucky movement which not the most skilled eye can pretend to foresee.

See, they are nearing the winning post—all abreast—each so straining every nerve and forcing every muscle that it looks as if the race will end in a dead heat, but no! for one of the runners, seizing his opportunity, gathering up his limbs like a tiger about to spring on its prey, leaps over the intervening space and alights at the winning post, bursting the ribbon—triumphant, the winner of the race.

And now with the garland of wild parsley upon his brow, and the palm branch in his hand, amid thunders of applause rolling after him, he is conducted down the stadium by a herald who in a loud voice proclaims his name, his parentage, and the city of his birth. Among the Greeks the acquisition of this crown was not only a life-long distinction for the winner, but reflected also the highest honour on his family and his state, and we are told that his countrymen used to testify their gratitude by triumphal receptions and banquets at the public expense.

Let us pause for a moment and recall to memory the price that our hero has paid for this corruptible crown—this chaplet of parsley or pine leaves.

In the first place he has had to pass through a period of training which beginning in childhood has endured through the years of youth, and is completed only on the attainment of man's estate. The exercises during these precious years of the athlete's life became more and more difficult and complex in proportion as his bodily powers grew in strength and suppleness, till at length when his limbs had gained that union of agility and beauty in which physical perfection consists, he was judged to be sufficiently trained to enter the lists, and compete for the coveted prize.

It is impossible not to feel a certain measure of admiration for the marvellous and matchless discipline of those Greek gymnasium schools. Nothing was left to chance; every detail in the life of the candidate was mapped out and attended to. Besides the Gymnasiarch, there were two other officers whose functions were to show how thorough was the training of the aspirant who had set his heart on winning a prize at the national games. It was the business of the Krosmetes to superintend every stage in the physical training of his client, while to the Sophronist fell the duty of moulding the mental and moral features of his soul. Let me cite you from the Enchiridion of Epictetus a passage which St. Paul might very well have had

before his mind when he referred to the severe training of the gymnasium: "Do you wish," asks the writer of a friend, "to conquer in the race? So do I, for it is honourable. But bethink yourself what this attempt implies, and then begin the undertaking. You will have to subject yourself to a determinate course. You must submit to a severe regime. You must pursue established exercises at fixed hours in heat and in cold. You must abstain from all delicacies in meat and drink, and yield yourself unreservedly to the control of your teachers, and even endure floggings."

Upon the completion of this severe training the candidate might enter his name for some event, but before he was permitted to take part in it he had to pass through yet another ordeal. Into the public stadium he was summoned by the herald, who, laying his hand upon the head of the competitor, enquired with a loud voice of the assembly: "Can anyone here present accuse this man of any crime? Is he a robber or a slave? or is he wicked or depraved in his life and morals?" If the young man passed through this trial of his virtue successfully, he was then conducted to the altar of Zeus, the punisher of the perjured, where, with solemn rites, he was required to swear that he had gone through the proper training, and that he would conform to the laws of the contest before him.

What was it, let me ask, that induced the

smart young men of that day to subject themselves to this painful and laborious discipline of the gymnasium? For so trying was it that sometimes men fell out of the race while it was actually being run, and sometimes there were cases of competitors dropping down dead at the winning post itself.

Was the contemptible prize of which the Apostle speaks worth the price paid for it? Was it worth the risk of a man's life? Clearly it was thought so by the youth of this bygone civilisation.

The fact is we are so constituted that when we have our heart in our work, no matter what that work may be, we do not pay much attention to the degree of pain we may have to endure as the price of its accomplishment. Pain and pleasure are not so mutually exclusive of each other as they would seem to be when judged apart by the frigid onlooker. On the contrary, they are complementary of each other, pain only emphasising pleasure.

Sweet the pleasure after pain. And so it came to pass that the competitors for the prizes at the Isthmian games willingly and eagerly went in for training, refraining themselves from all things that were prejudicial to the end they had in view; curbing their passions, checking their appetites, scorning all self-indulgence, because their hearts were fixed on the something higher, to which the lower appetites must be

sacrificed. They sacrificed the lower joys for the higher, they purchased pleasure at the price of pain.

And now, let me invite you to draw from this object lesson, provided for our instruction by the men of ancient Greece, the truths which it ought to bring home to us.

St. Paul would seem to argue in this strain. He asks: Do you, my Christian brethren, believe that at the end of this race of life there is awaiting you, not a corruptible but an incorruptible crown, a garland of unfading roses woven for you by the hand of Christ Himself?"

"Do you verily believe that this crown of life is a prize most certainly attainable by each one of you, provided only you conform to the rules of the game?"

"Do you in truth fully believe that this crown is not only surely within your reach, but that it is your sacred duty, your vocation, your mission at all costs to win and wear it?"

"Moreover, do you believe that to encourage you to make an effort to obtain it, Jesus Christ, with bleeding feet, wearing a crown of thorns, and bearing a heavy cross, has gone before you blessing the royal road leading up to the immortal prize?"

"And lastly, is it your settled conviction that if you do not train for and run in this race, that at the close of life not only will you miss the prize of life, but all that it implies, ecstatic joy, ever-

lasting bliss, rapturous love, and that all this will be lost, and lost for ever, through your own fault, your folly, your selfishness, your slothfulness?"

As you are, as you ought to be, persuaded that the prize of eternal life is being offered to you, if only you will strive for it, you will, I feel sure, make the necessary effort. If to obtain a corruptible crown the Corinthian pagans did so much, you Christians will not do less to win the crown that is incorruptible.

Make not provision for the flesh, walk not after the flesh, sow not in the flesh, live not after the flesh; but mortify the flesh, chastise the flesh, crucify the flesh. "For if you live according to the flesh you shall die, but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live."

The apostles of naturalism will of course laugh at this doctrine as a worn-out theory. They hold one's only duty is to amuse oneself, to enjoy the present hour, to make it tingle with some new sensation. For them there is but one sin, that of being dull. Accordingly these modern hierophants of a materialistic gospel advise their disciples not to mortify, but to gratify the flesh; to give it all the sleep it asks, to feed its appetite on dainties rich and rare, to slake its thirst on wines choice and costly, and to clothe it in garments soft and sumptuous. "Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that

are present . . . let not the flower of the time pass by: let us crown ourselves with roses before they are withered, let no meadow escape our riot."

"These things," says the Holy Spirit, "they thought, and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them."

Let us—the children of Christian forbears—take all precaution against this microbe of naturalism which is in the air we breathe, let us inoculate the flesh with the myrrh of mortification, that will enable us to throw off this deadly poison with which in our day we are attacked. Let us gird our loins, and after the example of our sainted brethren gone before, let us curb and chide, chasten and chastise the flesh, lest instead of clothing the soul in Heaven it seduce us to Hell.

Listen to the Apostle. Surely if ever there lived a man on this earth who had nothing to fear from his flesh it was St. Paul, and yet, how does he treat it? Listen to his solemn words full of warning to us: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection."

Behold here the rule which each one of us must follow, if we would win in the Christian race. We must chastise our bodies, so much at least as is necessary in order to keep them in subjection. In other words, man's animal nature, like all other animal natures, must be tamed and trained into obedience, and this can be done only by

stinting and starving its inordinate appetites, by curbing and checking its wantonness, by chiding, chastening, and chastising its rebelliousness.

The youngest among us is nearing the end of the race, and when it shall have been run, and the gasping for breath is quick and short and faint, then with a last supreme effort may you spring forth into the Everlasting Arms, where saved and safe in the embrace of God your Father may you hear the long-sought word: "Well done, well done."

Then, clothed with the garment of glory and crowned with the garland of immortality, shall you enter the land of triumph and victory—the Home of those troops of Virgins who sacrificed youth and beauty to follow the Lamb whereso-ever He goeth; the Home of the companies of Confessors who fought the good fight, ran their course, kept the faith and now wear the crown of righteousness; the Home of the armies of Martyrs who, triumphant over persecution, fire, and the sword, having dyed their garments in the blood of the Lamb, now hold the golden palm of everlasting victory: there shall your Guardian Angel proclaim to all the Chivalry of Heaven the story of your struggle and your victory.

Then, when you shall look down from your throne on high upon this insignificant grain of dust—this planet—this earth—and survey the poor and paltry scene of your former struggles,

how rapturous will be your joyous prayer of thanksgiving to God that, before it was too late, you had learned the great lesson that the crown of eternal life is won only by those who strive and train, and race for it.

"So run that you may obtain." Roll up in your thousands, sign on at once, and go into training, and when you start run for your life.

XI

THE WEAPON OF PRAYER

"It is no use praying, I never get what I ask for." "What is the good of praying when God knows what we want before we ask?" "I don't go to church, because really the service is so tiresome and the preaching insufferably dull." "How can you expect us to go to church on Sundays, when it is one's only chance for a day's spin in a car, or when one is bound to spend the time on the links so as to keep fit for the coming week?" "Really, don't ask me to go to church, when there is the blue vault of heaven over you, and the lovely green cliffs rolling away as far as eye can see. I can pray so much better in the open than boxed up in a pew, where the air is stuffy, the music execrable, and the sermon platitudes."

In these answers to the question, "Why don't you go to church on Sundays?" you have the usual excuses offered for not going. It is all very painful and sad, and shows that the true reasons for going to church have ceased to be appreciated.

Of course the real reason why people give up churchgoing is because they have already given

up believing, or caring, or reckoning with religion at all.

Prayer is not a matter of taste, or a work of supererogation, nor is it a business transaction across a counter; it is not putting down so much and taking up what you have asked for. Prayer is something far better and holier; it is the soul's audience time with Heaven's King, it is our special opportunity for acts of homage, of praise, thanking God for what He is in Himself and then for what He is to us.

Prayer is the very highest operation of the soul. During it all the faculties of the soul are called forth and are employed in the most meritorious work in which they can be engaged.

Prayer is giving rather than getting. In it we pour forth our whole being in acts of adoration, praise and thanksgiving; we intone the "Gloria in excelsis," or chant the "Magnificat," or sing the psalms, or litanies in which the soul seeks to express its worship of the Almighty, and its indebtedness to Him for all His beauty and excellence, as well as for all His mercy and all His love.

God, if He does not always grant us our petition, always gives us some gift immeasurably better for us than the one we asked for. Prayer never fails of its mark; it always does us good.

The fact of the matter is we only too often pray for what would be hurtful, not helpful to our Christian life. It would be well for those who

seem to be forgetting the meaning of prayer to make a few meditations on the petitions in the "Our Father." In that best of all prayers you have epitomised the Christian dispensation, the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes taught by the Master. The Lord's Prayer is a treasury of grace, an arsenal of spiritual weapons, and a school of lessons in the ascetic life.

We ask amiss sometimes, our pleading so often is for some temporal goal, success, or advantage which God may see not to be useful for us. He withholds it, and then we turn away exclaiming: "What's the use?"

Ask for what is profitable for your soul—for strength to bear God's Will, for courage to do it; plead for spiritual strength and heavenly ambitions and you will obtain what you desire.

Whatever happens do not be so foolish as to turn away from prayer, ignoring God and neglecting His service. To give up prayer is to forfeit salvation, for it is nothing else than spiritual suicide—starving the soul to death. Prayer, forget it never, is the soul's food, and you can no more dispense with nourishment for the soul than you can do without sustenance for the body.

All life needs some kind of foodstuff for its support. Indeed, it is true to say that the organic world is marked off from the inorganic precisely by this, that whereas the latter is capable of no kind of nourishment, the former, on the contrary, can only live and thrive on a diet suitable to it.

The crystal may seem to grow, but in reality it does not; whereas the organism does grow and wax strong, because it absorbs into its system some kind of foodstuff which it transforms into its own substance.

Ask yourselves why the flowers in our public parks or gardens retain for so long their beauty, colour and characteristic loveliness? It is because they support themselves and are nourished by such elements as carbon, oxygen and hydrogen which, drawn under the stimulus of light and heat and rain into the laboratories of root, stem and leaf, are there manufactured into substances fitted finally to build up the fibre of their wood and the delicacy of their petals.

What we know of life in our gardens is true of life in our fields, life in animals and in man himself. We all recognise that not to eat is to starve to death. The more the work done by a human body, or for the matter of that by an animal body, the more regular and the more nourishing must be the food or fodder provided for its support. We must charge the battery, coal the engine, feed the animal.

Now to turn to the soul. No human soul, no human being can hope to live, to keep in health, and to grow spiritually strong unless he is fed regularly on the food of prayer. "My bones are dried up, because I have forgotten to eat my bread."

Not to pray is to starve, and to starve one's

soul to death through one's own fault is to commit spiritual self-slaughter.

Someone will say: "But unfortunately the claims of modern life are so constantly pressing and urgent that there is no time left for the work of prayer." To this excuse I can but answer: "There is such a thing as making time. And we make time for one duty by robbing another of less importance of some of the time usually allotted to it. To say there is no time for prayer is like telling one there is no time for sleep and no time for meals." I repeat it, time must be made for prayer lest otherwise we die of inanition and spiritual anæmia. Cannot we manage to spend less time on newspaper, magazine and romance-reading and so create quite a series of daily moments for spiritual reading, and for prayer both mental and vocal?

"But," it will be urged, "prayer is so irksome, and it is so hard to persevere in it. It is all easy enough to pray when the music is entrancing, and you feel like praying, but just to sink to your knees morning and night and say your prayers is dull, distracting work, and little or no good can come from it." Well, there's the rub. No doubt prayer is a work, an effort and a tremendous test of loyalty and love. But keep at it, persevere in it and you will with its golden key unlock the treasury of heaven and draw the grace and blessing to relish what is right and just, and to win the

constant enjoyment of God's blessing to be pressed from the Sacred Heart of Jesus by the prayer of the persevering. Let me illustrate what I mean by the example of the Syro-Phœnician woman. What a lovely story hers is! Just listen to this:

Jesus, accompanied by the disciples, was making His way toward the coast on the north-west of the highlands of Galilee. A rumour of the approach of the Wonder-worker seems to have been noised abroad; for somewhere between the coasts of Sidon and Tyre there lived a poor woman with an only child who was possessed of a devil, to whom it was reported that Jesus was coming that way. How many years that poor child had been afflicted, or how many remedies that poor mother had applied in vain, I know not; all I know is this: that so soon as she heard of Our Lord's rumoured presence in the neighbourhood, forthwith she set out, resolved not to come back till her prayer was heard. Oh! I fancy I can see her so worn by sorrow, so radiant with hope, hurrying ever forward like one beside herself, asking at every hamlet, and of each chance passer-by, such questions as these: "Have you seen Him?" "Is He coming this way?" "Is He healing diseases?" Onward she leaps, rather than runs, till at length her joy knows no bounds. In the distance, perhaps, through a cleft in the hillside, she sees a dark moving mass. Straining her eyes, she runs forward, springs to the ledge of a projecting rock

by the way, where she may be seen as well as see, and then, almost before Jesus is within hearing distance of her, she wails out—it was like a wail of the wind—the piteous cry: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David, for my daughter is grievously troubled with a devil." Nearer and nearer the Physician, surrounded by His band of followers, approaches. Again and again, till her voice grows hoarse, the mother repeats her cry, "Have pity on me." The procession is abreast of her, has passed her: and Jesus, Who had said, "Ask and you shall receive," answered her not a word, returned her not a look. Nothing daunted or discouraged, leaping once more into the road and pushing her way among the throng, she lays hold of the disciples, begging of them to tell Him her sad story; but it was all of no avail. They bade her hold her peace and not trouble them with her frantic cries and gestures. And when by no means they could get rid of her, turning to Our Lord they asked Him to send her away. Jesus, Who it would seem from St. Mark's report of the incident, was on His way into some neighbouring house, stopped and turning to the distracted suppliant, said to her, "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost, of the house of Israel." Then, perhaps, it was that, crossing the threshold, He passed out of sight. Oh, my friends, our Divine Lord's Heart suffered far more than the poor woman's by this delay in the answer to her petition; but among other reasons for it there was the

sad necessity of teaching us, through her, to persevere in prayer. The valiant woman, who was quick to recognise in His Face and Voice the mercy in store for her, all unbidden followed Him into the house, where, falling prone on her face in adoration, she sobbed out from a breaking heart the petition: "Lord, help me!" See her, look at her, and learn how to make a way unto the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In words intelligible enough to one who was a Syro-Phœnician, Jesus said to her: "It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs." Upon this I can see the suppliant raising her head from the ground, clasping her hands, looking Him full in the face, and sure of His sympathy now, replying: "Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their master" —as though she would say: "I do not ask to be treated as a member of the family, or as a guest, or even as a servant: provided only I may belong to the Master of the house, it is enough for me to be the whelp under His table; for there I shall not be forgotten by Him Who remembers all and fills every creature with benediction."

The Chanaanite had asked, and received not; had sought, and found not; and now she knocked, and it was opened to her. Out from that door, forth from that Heart, came the words that have rung through the ages: "Oh, woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." Persevere in prayer.

Now, let me pass on to mental prayer. What a fine tonic for the soul is contemplation and meditation. It enlightens the mind, strengthens the will and inflames the heart as no other spiritual exercise can possibly do. But you will say: "It is quite impossible to meditate in the rush and fever of modern life. Besides, even if one had the leisure, the inclination would be wanting. I am not at all clever, and I could no more plough through a meditation than I could aviate, or lift myself up by my shoe-strings." There is no doubt meditation, like any other exercise, is difficult without practice. Piano-playing, violin exercise, painting and dancing, or even games, golf and cricket and football, need to be practised to make oneself efficient in them. It is the same with prayer. But follow me, and let me show you that meditation is not so difficult as it seems. Let me suppose you are going to take for your subject of meditation the text: "And He said to all. If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Well, I should pause to remind myself that our Lord "*said to all*," so that there is no exception to the case; in fact He goes on to say emphatically, "*if any one will come after Me*," therefore, if I want to come after Him, I too must make up my mind there is only one way of doing it—I too must deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Him—I notice that our Lord says, "If anyone *will* come." His service is no slavery, but free, it is will-service. The object in going

after Him is just this, to get near Him and become like Him. The Christian religion clearly enough is one of self-denial and self-conquest. I must cut off what is sinful, what is dangerous, what is inexpedient. There is no mistake about it, this religion of the Crucified is no easygoing, Sunday dress affair ; it is a probing, a chastening, a pruning business. It is always cutting off, or burning away some growth or tendency which might prove fatal to the soul if allowed to have its own way. It is not a Sunday practice, but a daily effort. To deny oneself is not enough, to take up one's cross just now and then will not serve our purpose. As we are to follow Christ all the time, we must take up the cross daily, maybe hourly, and it is to be done not under compulsion, as when Simon of Cyrene helped Christ to bear His, but it is to be taken up with both hands, even if it is a burden from the battle-front, and lifted like a precious burden till it is planted beside the Master on Calvary. How small and insignificant it will then look, standing beside His ! Mary beside Christ, you beside your dead or wounded husband, father or child.

Having come to grips with the lesson conveyed by the text or message, go on to unfold the reasons appealing with special force to you for accepting it. In the present instance the chief reasons for taking up your cross and following Our Lord will be because He bids you to do so, because it would be splendid to follow such a leader, and would inevitably result in the cross being exchanged, at

the end of life's march, for a crown—the crown of life—incorruptible and ever glorious.

Then, with these motives of action before your mind, the will becomes inspired and impelled to make good and strong resolutions to follow Christ, and so you will rise from the struggle of meditation, like a soldier called to the front, determined in life and in death to fight on the side of your Captain King.

Lately I have spent not a little time in the camps of some of the divisions now gone to the fighting area. What most of all struck me in my visits to the men was their fine soldierlike appearance and bearing. Both infantry and cavalry looked well cared for, well fed, and well armed. Indeed, you only had to wander through the camps, and to see the stores, and watch the cooks at work to be satisfied that the British soldier of to-day is done well, and he knows, and acknowledges it. Every Christian is a soldier—he too needs the rations of prayer and the drill of spiritual exercise to fit him for service in the field of spiritual combat. Without prayer the Christian is like a soldier without weapons, he is not ready for the fighting line. Get ready, get trained in the School of Christ: "Esto miles," be a soldier. Many a wounded officer, gunner and trooper has assured me that in the trenches, and in the open under fire, men who thought they could not pray, prayed with the terror of saints.

It is my conviction that what has brought on

this overdue war has been, among other causes, our neglect of prayer, of religion. In England, as well as in France, God and God's commandments have been ignored, spurned, defied. In France irreligion has been a boast. Not only have governments vied with each other in their attempts to quench the lights of heaven, to close Catholic schools and clerical seminaries, but with studied thoroughness the name of God has been blotted out of school books, and the tokens of religion have been everywhere torn down and a black mark set against any official who ventured even to go inside a church. I will not dwell on the treatment meted out to religious of either sex, but let me just say that the dechristianisation of France has been carried out with the ruthless logic of a syllogism. France turned Religion out of the country and slammed the door in her face.

As for England, she has not flaunted her irreligion in one's face. Here in England we are not as logical and virulent and violent as in France, but for all that, we have habitually left God out of our reckoning. His wishes have had little or no weight with us. As a nation we have been getting farther and farther away from vital Christianity. Among the leisured classes has there been that reverence for God and that Sunday observance once so characteristic of this country? From Friday to Tuesday have not men and women in high society been indulging in revels on the river, or in orgies in

country-houses, or in joy-rides in motors. As a matter of fact Sunday has been the busiest day in the week, not only for so-called smart people, but for their domestics and hangers-on also. Then look at the wilful, wanton extravagance, the lust of luxuries, the waste of money, of time, of talent, of virtue, of opportunities. And all this wanton dissipation has been carried on in presence of servants who pass it on wholesale to the shopkeeper, who retails it across the counter to the man in the street, till what with the Press, the shopkeeper, and the loiterers, the sins of society have become common property, and as the fashions of to-day get down to villadom and the slums to-morrow, so the vices now in vogue in the West End are copied in all their grossness and vulgarity as soon as possible in the East End. The poet drew no false picture of the luxury-loving English lad when he described him as one:

"Whose gods were luxury and chance."

Someone will no doubt find fault with me for daring to call the attention of my countrymen to their vices, which have provoked the Almighty, and helped to bring about this war-slaughter which is so terribly scourging us for our sins. But how have we been persistently and constantly treating God? No private prayer in the week, and no public service on Sunday. In the West End of London, I do not believe five

per hundred of society have been in the habit of going to church during the season. If with Catholics the case is different, you must remember we have to go to Mass on Sundays; it is with us a sacred duty. Do the working-class go any better than the leisured classes? I very much fear they do not.

A nation that neglects its religious duties will easily fall a prey to the vice of race-suicide, and to immodesty in dress, which during the past few years has been growing more and more offensive, and more and more expressive of our decadence in a moral sense. We have fallen into the sins of the cities of the plains due to "fullness of bread and idleness."

May this murderous war, turning England into a house of mourning, open our eyes to our past follies, and bring us to repentance with resolves not to fall back into our sins when the ghastly strain of the struggle is relaxed and we return slowly to peace, weeping over our dead.

May we as a nation return to God, and convert Sunday into a day of worship as well as of recreation. It is not golfing on Sunday of which I complain, but spending all day at it, without a thought of God, without an idea of our, or our servants', need of prayer—our true spiritual food.

Let us put order into our lives, and live by some sort of rule, and not by the whim of the hour, or the fashion of the moment, or the chance for amusement.

For some time to come we shall have upon our hands not only wounded soldiers, and the families of those who are doing the fighting for us, but we shall have to pay special attention to other sections of the community who will be brought to actual starvation by this war-scourge if we help them not—actors and actresses, dress-makers, tailors, florists, jewellers, painters, builders, and hosts of others too numerous to catalogue. We shall have many pressing calls upon our charity.

May God draw blessings for us out of this devastating war, and may He bring us to see and to acknowledge that to bear the burden of life as it is to-day weighing upon us, we must sink to our knees before Him, and proclaim publicly before the world that He is our God and we are His people.

"We come to Thee, sweet Saviour,
Thou wilt not ask us why,
We cannot live without Thee,
Still less without Thee die."

Must Sunday go? No, but it must be converted into a day to renew, to re-create soul and body—sending man into the week strong to bear God's will, and to do his life's work and duty.

XII

ANOTHER WAR TO WAGE

The war which each one of us has to wage is, as Washington said, on the territory under his own hat. It is much easier to get inspired with the passion to fight some foreign foe than to rise up against one so native and intimate as oneself. Yet General Nogi used to tell his Japanese troops that, till a man had learned to fight and conquer himself, he was not properly equipped "to take on" anyone else. As a matter of fact, we British have been holding our own, and have reported ourselves to the Germans in a very telling manner, and we have proved our dynamic force in every engagement in which our troops have flung themselves against armies five times their number. We can fight others all right.

Now comes the time to turn the weapons of warfare upon ourselves. Know thyself, fight thyself, conquer thyself are bits of advice full of tough meaning. They hold plenty of meat on the bone. Let us wrestle with them and get at their full significance.

When a man has reached self-knowledge there is every hope of his achieving self-conquest, self-

realisation. I do not think a Britisher can do better work for God, or King or Country, than to take himself in hand, determining to make the best of himself. After all, what mission can be finer or nobler than to build up a personal character of which we need not be ashamed, a character formed and fashioned on the lines laid down for us by Him Who was the noblest of the noble, the bravest of the brave, the holiest of the holy—Jesus Christ? For all Christians in all times He must ever be not only their highest pattern of virtue, but as Ranke points out, the greatest incentive to its practice.

Look the world over and you will not come upon better raw material out of which to weave garments of glory than you will find in the British Empire, or in those nations, such as the United States, which descend so largely from British stock. To be satisfied about this we have but to read the war events as they are chronicled from day to day in the Press. In the opening scenes of this terrible tragedy I tried to keep count of the most conspicuous, thrilling and heroic deeds wrought on battlefields by our men in khaki. Soon I had to give up the attempt, for the deeds of valour succeeded each other so rapidly that there was no keeping pace with them. One could but read on, thanking God our brothers in arms were so splendid, and so irresistible when at close quarters with the enemy. Whether overwhelmed by numbers or shattered by shell, the British troops seem to take it all in the day's work. They are never beaten, for

they refuse to go under, no matter what hail of fire may find them and riddle their ranks. It is something to be proud of, to be linked by chains of affinity to men who march on day and night without halting, who reach entrenchments in which they stand waist-deep in water, where they are drenched to the skin, famished with hunger, tortured with undressed wounds, overcome with shell fumes, oppressed with want of sleep, and held back from "getting at 'em," because if they did they would be mowed down to a man under the withering, murderous fire from guns that have found their range, and by troops far superior in numbers. These "Tommies" hate being held back; they do not know what fear is. It may be they describe it as "hell let loose," but the more appalling the situation the keener they are to plunge into it and keep at it. Take one instance only just by way of showing what I mean. In the operations round Cambrai we are told that:—

"At dawn on August 26th the position was critical, for 300,000 Germans were thrown on our lines with the known intention of wiping out the British Army. Seven hundred guns were trained upon the heroic force, and the pressure on the extreme left, where the 3rd, 4th (now moving up), and 5th Divisions were under General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, was so great that he could not carry out the intended further retirement. The force held tight and fought with courage and resource. Thus far the Ger-

mans had succeeded in their plans. They had tied us down to a position, and numbers they calculated would then prevail to overwhelm our force. The numbers came. Companies, battalions, and brigades deployed in endless succession, but only to be destroyed by the splendid shooting of the British Army, and soon the field was strewn with ramparts of dead which obscured the field of vision. At places some of our men in the lulls of the firing had to run out to these heaps to obtain warning of the next approach, and the Germans halted at the masess of the fallen and used them as cover. Thousands upon thousands of the enemy were shot down and replaced by thousands more. The Gloucester Battalion was one of those most hotly assailed. During the action a German aeroplane, flying the French flag, came over the line, but a machine-gun succeeded in bringing it to earth. Many a deed worthy of the Victoria Cross was done on August the 26th. Two men were seen bringing in a wounded soldier under a terrific fire, and another left the lines in the face of the advancing Germans to carry back a fallen comrade in a party which was partially cut off, but was rescued by the 4th Dragoon Guards in a gallant charge."

Well may we be proud, I repeat, of men who bring such glory to our flag, and prove they are made of stuff that cannot shrink, lose colour, or be torn to pieces. Their letters home paint in its true pigments the horror of the sights around

them, the hell-like fire of war, but they assure you that they want to be nowhere else till the fight is done, and the foe is laid low for ever. "I chose to come, mother," writes one lieutenant. "I am sharing a fighting man's lot and am glad of it, and am thankful I am alive to keep plunging into it. My only trouble is I have to smoke tea leaves instead of tobacco. Many a pal would give his whole kit for a single match."

I have digressed, but I want to bring home to you the fact that it is in war-time the true Briton reveals his inner self and real worth to his fellows. It is when there is no time for self-consciousness that the Briton displays his native characteristics, and proves beyond all manner of doubt that there is in him the stuff out of which are made the heroes of Christianity—saints.

Is it too much to hope and believe that when this ghastly life-and-death struggle is fought to the finish we shall find England more fully recognising the claims of God and the need of keeping right with Him? Perhaps we as a nation needed this awful scourge to bring us to our knees, and to force us to realise we cannot run Republics or Empires in the ways of peace without God's blessing and help. One thing is certain, and it is this, that hundreds of thousands of our Allies who had never bowed their heads to God since the day of their first Communion, have been reconciled to Him by confession on the battle-field, and have gone into the fight as into

the holiest crusade that ever rallied men to a Christian flag.

Think of it, 60,000 priests with the colours and in the fighting line, absolving their fellows in the ranks, and saying Mass when there is a lull in the trenches, or wherever they can set up a portable altar. Surely this must tell upon a land that was being systematically dechristianised by successive governments glorying in their infidel triumphs over Christianity. Is there not good reason to hope that the people of France and England too will have learned from this war that they are not sent here, on this blood-stained earth, merely to have a good time, to enjoy themselves, to crown themselves with roses before they are withered, to plunge into every inconceivable vice, from lust to gambling, to indulge in every pastime, from river-riotings to watching prize-fights in the ring, and to end life worn-out and famished on the garbage of sin, and the Dead Sea apples of despair?

Perhaps we needed a terribly rude awakening to bring us to our right senses. What the South African War failed to teach I really believe this world-war will bring home to us. This latter, unlike the former war, is a religious war, is a crusade against dechristianisation and barbarism. It is for the Christianity of Christ against the brutality of Nietzsche that we are contending; it is for the peace and blessing of Christian civilisation that the Allies are pushing through the storm

of battle on to victory. It is the Cross against the Sword. Not only our soldiers abroad, but our stay-at-homes are being chastened under the chastisement through which, without exception, they are passing. The fire is burning off the dross from the fine gold of our English characters, and our peoples on every rung of the social ladder stand forth to-day in the searchlight of truth, clearer, brighter and holier than ever they did before the purging fires had their way, testing their worth in the refining flame. A young wounded Guardsman being asked in hospital by his father if he had seen much infidelity or agnosticism among his brother officers on active service, replied : "Father, when you are under fire there is no time for agnosticism or what not; we all just call upon God and fight for all we are worth."

Is it not the same at home? Have not mothers, wives, daughters and lovers in war-time just dropped their Naturalism or Humanitarianism, their Christian Science, their Higher Criticism, their so-called Agnosticism and Modernism, and with faces buried in their hands have they not "wept their sad bosoms empty" pleading with God for His protection on those in the front, and for strength and courage for dear ones left behind? This war has brought more honour and glory to God than a hundred years of peace. Never was there so much prayer, so much sympathy, so much kindness, so much self-control and self-

sacrifice conspicuous in all walks of life as there is to-day in England.

God knows that we shall need His help and grace more than ever when this hellish war with all its fiendish machinations is done with. We must go into spiritual training, so that later on there may be no reaction, no peace with self, but thoroughly sustained warfare against that mob of passions which now, for the moment, held down in the dungeons of our lower selves, will attempt in the day of victory to break loose and wreck the palace of our souls, dethroning and making riot in the innermost sanctuary of the heart. Know thyself, fight thyself, conquer thyself now. Put method into your life, live by some well-thought-out scheme of action ; have some fixed hour for rising, and definite moments for prayer, and some work of mercy which under all circumstances you will continue to practise. Do not poison the well of life by desultory reading, and do not undermine your nervous system by incessant cigarette smoking, or other nerve-destroying practices. Choose your friends, and let them be not only congenial but uplifting and bracing as a sea-breeze. But, above all things, make religion the biggest factor in your life. "It is all or nothing," sings the poet. Let your religion be to you what I have found it to be to soldiers who are fighting for us at the front. Listen to this. Lately I was in the New Forest where 20,000 of our men were encamped waiting for orders to

start for the front. It would have moved the least emotional to tears to have visited that Saturday the beautiful little Gothic church outside Lyndhurst. It kept filling with men in khaki from the early afternoon till late at night. There, in the calm before the storm, men on the staff and in the ranks were kneeling without note of distinction to a civilian beside one another, waiting to take their turn to go to confession and receive absolution. It was all done so unostentatiously, so honestly, and thoroughly that the most sceptical could not have watched the scene without deep emotion. Some were married men with their wives and little ones with them, while more were bright-eyed boys not out of their teens. It made no difference, they all went through their work in a businesslike way, and when they had done their penance after confession not a 'few crept up to Our Lady's shrine and placed a lit candle, or else a plucked flower at her feet, staying on to say their rosary. Next morning we had two Masses in camp. Among others I had the Scots Guards at mine. It was a picturesque scene, in a sequestered spot outside the camp, with forest trees forming a background and the simple altar, around which the men were grouped, looking all the more solemn and in dead earnest for the sombre colouring of their khaki uniforms. Seldom have I felt so impressed as I did when after the Gospel I faced these magnificent Guardsmen and gave them a message from God to

take to the front. Their sunburnt, clean-shaven faces and deep-set features stood out so grand against the russet-dyed bracken on which they sat that you almost fancied you could already see the flame of victory burning on their foreheads. When I reminded them that theirs was the finest apostolate to which ever Guardsmen had been called, and that the war into which they were about to plunge was a crusade not to rescue the Sepulchre but the Gospel itself of Christ from hands that would substitute for it the religion of brute force, the men sat up so stiffly that you might have thought they were about to spring to their feet and feel for their weapons of war. I exhorted them to return from the seat of war in the same Christian spirit in which they were setting out to it, only with this difference, that instead of directing their weapons of wrath upon a foreign foe they should then turn them upon a foe within the realm of their own souls, their own lower restless animal natures, which if let loose might as readily and fatally destroy what was far more rich and rare, precious and sacred to God, than the priceless treasures of Louvain or Rheims, namely, their Christian heritage with its wealth of present grace and promise of future glory.

To my readers I repeat my parting words to the Guards: "You are not your own. You are bought at a great price." Fight then the good fight, run your course, keep the Faith

till you exchange it for triumph in the land of Victory.

"The highest Faith makes still the highest man,
For we grow like the things our souls believe,
And rise or sink as we aim high or low.
No mirror shows such likeness of the face
As Faith we live by of the heart and mind;
We are in very truth that which we love,
And Love, like noblest deeds, is born of Faith."

XIII

"THERE IS NO SIN!"

The modern world is very busy just now trying to explain away sin. We are assured by some people that sin, as such, does not exist—in other words, is an illusion—and that moral evil is merely the failure to reach some ideal or metaphysical standard. So that, as you cannot blame a woman for not attaining a certain standard of physical beauty, so neither may you blame a man for not reaching a particular standard of moral holiness. We are told that, as we have nothing but pity for the child who cannot see straight, so we must feel only compassion for the girl who cannot speak straight. If we were to judge sinful actions, therefore, according to the ideas of this school, as mere failure to reach some recognised and ideal standard of morality, we should have to put aside all thought of correction. We could not in decency find fault with one another, and the necessity for either law or religion would be gone.

But there is another school which tells us that evil is the outcome of ignorance; and that as we advance in knowledge, and as the world

grows in science, this moral evil will be swept away as darkness is dispelled by the rising sun. If this were so, then would the learned scientist be the most innocent member of society, while the child in its mother's arms would be the most criminal. I fail to discover that, because we are teaching in our elementary schools all sorts of irrelevant subjects which are, in too many cases, not likely to be of the slightest use to the child in after life, the younger generation is so much more advanced in morality and religious thought than its elders. On the contrary, I find the mechanic and the man in the street thinking that they now know enough to do without religion at all.

There is, again, another school which teaches us that there can be no such thing as sin, for the very good reason that the Almighty cares little for what we do. How, so runs the argument, could an Omnipotent Being like God trouble Himself as to the words or actions of such insignificant insects as ourselves? It would be as reasonable for us to investigate the moral attributes of the flies on the window-pane as for an Almighty God to attach any importance to our wholly unimportant doings. This position is practically indistinguishable from Atheism, for though that particular "ism," as such, is not, I am assured, now looked upon with favour in the best circles, what else is the habitual exclusion of the thought of God from every

detail of our daily lives but a denial of the Godhead?

A fourth school declares that whatever moral evil exists in the world is the outcome of modern civilisation, the result of social inequalities, which again are the inevitable product of the conditions, political and economic, under which we live. The remedy for this state of things, we are taught, must be looked for in the universal adoption of Socialism. If the Socialists get their way, property will be abolished, and as a curiously illogical consequence, sin will cease to exist. But I do not find that people grow morally better in the measure of their prosperity, and though in theory it may be, and ought to be, easy to be virtuous on five thousand a year, we all know that in practice the possession of wealth brings manifold temptations of its own.

Lastly, there are those curiously-minded people who profess to regard sin as something negative rather than positive. Sin is not, they maintain, with all the air of philosophers, so much an active evil as a privation of good. It is like the shadow which obscures the sun. Like those others of whom I have spoken, they hazard the opinion that sin is merely a failure to reach a certain standard of perfection, that it is, monstrous as the theory sounds, when stated in this bald fashion, an imperfect good.

If I tell a lie in order to escape punishment for some misdeed, am I then telling the truth

in some imperfect way? If a society woman writes a garbled and venomous memoir of one whom she has called her friend, and passes it on to the public, has she not done something more positive than simply failing to reach a certain standard of good? She has indeed used her gifts to work actual harm. She is poisoning the moral atmosphere, and she knows it, and is taking money for that evil action. Surely it is positive sin, not comparative good, when we tell lies about one another, tear one another's characters to pieces, and repeat scandal and gossip with the sole excuse that "we have heard it."

In acting thus we have done something more than fail to reach a standard of perfection. We have misused our freedom; we have played the part of a criminal; and that is how it stands before God; and every human being, in his innermost conscience, knows and confesses it.

I do not propose to waste time in showing the contradictory nature of these positions. The point I want to emphasise is that they all, in the result, amount to this: that men and women are not to be blamed for their evil actions; that there is, in short, no such thing as moral evil in the sense which Christianity attaches to the words. It is, of course, admitted that a man can still offend against his neighbour, that is to say, Society in general, but in that case Society, if it finds him out, will take very good

care to punish him for its own protection, and the modern cynic will agree that it serves him right for being such a fool as to be found out.

But the idea that any of us can sin, in the old-fashioned sense, against God or ourselves, is an idea which the preachers of this new gospel have pronounced to be obsolete. Morality, then, is seen to be a mere matter of law or convention, and the abominable and insidious nature of this doctrine can be realised when we consider how many sins there are which neither the State nor public opinion punishes or condemns. The list of positive crimes, such as theft or murder, which must obviously be kept under in the interests of the community, is soon exhausted; and though in an avowedly Christian country, public opinion might be expected to exercise some restraining influence on such vicious practices as are not amenable to the law, the miserable truth is that the spread of these ideas in itself threatens to disturb the moral balance of the community, so that public opinion as a check ceases to exist.

Now, I do not wish for one moment to maintain that this particular age in which we live is the worst the world has ever seen. That would be an absurdly exaggerated estimate. But I do say that there is a spirit abroad which contains in itself such potentialities for evil as have never yet existed in any previous era; and my chief reason for that belief is that we are

rapidly heading towards a condition in which the very great majority of people will fail, as so many even now fail, to recognise evil when they see it. If you do not realise that you are living in and breathing a poisoned atmosphere, you will not make any efforts to escape from it, and therefore it becomes a serious duty for those of us who have sufficient moral sense left, not only to make a firm stand against these noxious and false ideas, but to endeavour, by example as well as by precept, to influence the minds and souls of our neighbours.

I have already admitted that the morality of the present day, *qua* morality, is not worse, indeed in many respects it is better, than the morality of many other periods of history. But even Pagan Rome, at its worst, indulged in its excesses with its eyes open. Ovid could say: "I see the better things, and approve them, but follow the worse." Cicero was not forgetful to tell us that he saw the evil, but the ray of light was extinguished by the immoralities within him. So long as human nature acknowledges the existence of an ideal, and recognises that its failure to reach that ideal is due to its own miserable weakness, and is not a thing to be proud of, we need not despair of the morality of any age.

But when preachers arise, who, in place of the pulpit, make use of the far easier method of influencing the public through the arts, through

the drama, through novels and poetry, and whose constant cry is that there is no such thing as sin, that morality is a convention, and that Nature is in all respects a better guide to conduct than Conscience; when, moreover, we see such preachers attracting an ever-growing following among the young, the inexperienced, and the half-educated, then, indeed, it requires an almost superhuman faith to continue to regard the future with any feelings save those of the deepest despair.

Self-deceit is the deadliest moral poison in the world; and I say emphatically that the worst criminal, who frankly recognises his own misdeeds for what they are, is in a healthier moral condition than the theorist who has succeeded in persuading himself and others that to be immoral is to be virtuous, and that to be vicious is to be free, even though he will not go so far as to practise what he preaches.

XIV

"SOME SORT OF RELIGION"

SIDE by side with that terrible indifferentism to spiritual things, which has been such a marked characteristic of the present day, there exists a curious frenzy, on the part of many mentally emotional people, to satisfy their starved souls by following any new "religion" that sets itself up as the final exposition of truth.

Science was active enough, during the last century, in sweeping away from men's minds all definite forms of religious beliefs, but a reaction inevitably followed from the hopeless materialism which was all that it had to offer the starved human heart. Science itself has had to give up many of its old dogmatic conclusions in view of the discoveries of recent years, and men and women are not now inclined to allow science to interfere too obtrusively in matters that are outside its legitimate province.

Materialism, then, as a definite theory of life, we may regard as dead, and apart from those Indifferentists who literally do not give a thought to spiritual things, and of whom, for the moment, I do not wish to speak, men and women are

recognising that some kind of religion is necessary for their well-being, that man has a higher destiny than merely to eat and drink and sleep away his life on earth, and that there is somewhere a clue to the meaning of this puzzling scheme of things if only one could find it.

Well, perhaps the clue is not so very hard to find, but, once having lost it, these unfortunate people give themselves an enormous amount of trouble and anxiety in looking for it in every direction except the right one. Hardly do we know whether to pity or condemn the devotees—they are to be numbered by the thousand—of such pseudo-religions as Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and other still vaguer forms of belief.

Take Spiritualism. One need not be a disbeliever in the genuineness of much of the phenomena of the séance-room to shrink with horror from the notion of founding a religion on such a basis. To me it is a most extraordinary and painful reflection that many worthy people, who actually call themselves Christians, profess to find religious comfort in these spiritualistic gatherings, because the "communications" and "spirit messages" afford evidence of the reality of a life beyond the grave.

Now, putting aside the question as to the worthlessness or otherwise of this evidence, is it not amazing that a Christian should require such proof? It is more than amazing. It is, in fact,

impossible, the truth being that these people are not Christians at all. That is to say, they have never grasped the elementary principles of the religion they believe themselves to hold, and the natural result is that, with no firm ground of faith to rest on, they are content to put their trust in what, at best, is of a doubtful nature, and at worst, will not bear thinking about.

Even more astonishing, if that be possible, is the hold that Theosophy has got over so many restless minds to-day. A religion which boasts that it teaches "the essential truths which lie behind all the great world religions" will probably be found itself to contain, if only by accident, a certain modicum of truth. And this very fact constitutes a grave danger to the credulous souls who swallow its teachings holus-bolus. And here again, as in the case of Spiritualism, we find that apparently one can accept Theosophy and yet remain a Christian! The explanation would seem to be that the Theosophists undertake to point out exactly where Christianity is right and where it has gone wrong; where the Bible may be relied upon, and where it is obviously in error; and how far, in short, it is safe for a Christian to hold to his faith. But a semi-Christian is not even a half-baked Christian. He is no Christian at all. And once more we are face to face with the saddening and appalling fact that the Christianity of our time is a purely nominal

matter, having no relation to the truths taught by Christ nearly two thousand years ago.

I should be loath to weary the reader by examining the claims of such a religion as Christian Science to call itself either Christian or scientific. That such a parody of Christianity could ever take captive the mind or imagination of any human being would be unthinkable, save on the hypothesis I have already suggested, viz.: that its followers have not the smallest conception of the meaning of Christianity, and no atom of right to call themselves followers of Christ.

Nor have I the patience to discuss the innumerable lesser systems which, masquerading as New Thought Centres, or Higher Thought Circles, attract a crowd of what I should be inclined to call mental parasites, who, without faith themselves, seek to regain consciousness of their souls by leaning on some other more self-satisfied personality.

Men are feeling the need for some sort of religion, and there is something hopeful in the fact. They have escaped from the blank horror of Materialism, but are still groping blindly in the darkness, and, though they may be feebly trying to "touch God's right hand in that darkness," they will never succeed till they learn to eschew these devious by-ways, and trust themselves wholly and unreservedly to Him. We may detest the materialistic attitude; but it is at least more understandable than this hybrid

Christianity. For, to put it on the lowest ground, what spiritual satisfaction have these curious, new semi-religions to offer that Christianity has not supplied far more abundantly for the last nineteen hundred years?

When Christ came humanity was expiring of suicidal corruption. Society was rotten to the core. More than half the world was enslaved to the other half, and that other was enslaved more hopelessly to its own passions. Christianity purified the heart of Europe from its grossness, and the tide of grace having passed into it, there sprang forth from it the Christian family with its love of home and traditions of chivalry, the Christian church and abbey with their religious life and the care of God's poor; Christian guilds and fraternities for the protection of the arts and crafts; Christian hospitals and asylums for the shelter of the sick and maimed, Christian schools and universities for the education of the feudal lord and the serf; and the Christian nation with its motto: *Pro Deo, Rege et Patria.* Thus did Christianity proclaim and practise her true ideal of the universal brotherhood of man.

The deadening influence of Materialism has brought us perilously near to the state of things prevailing before Christianity finally asserted itself. Vice stalks naked and unashamed through our great cities, and multitudes rush hither and thither, seeking for some safe spiritual guide, some firm rock of repose for their agitated souls

in Philosophy, in New Thought, in Gnosticism or even Occultism, wherein they strive to attain that peace of mind and serenity of heart which the Master reminds us "the world cannot give."

What Christianity has done, Christianity can and will do again. Meanwhile those who refuse to be satisfied with its ancient teachings attempt to persuade themselves and each other that the great work accomplished by Christianity in times past was due to the truths of moral philosophy which were found to be tied up with what are termed the "silly superstitions and childish extravagances," suitable perhaps to a church in her infancy, but wholly out of date and out of place in her growth to maturer years and better sense.

Truth to tell, there is nothing more delusive than this comparison between the teaching of Christ and the philosophy of the pagan world. Philosophy hopes to cure the vices of human nature by appealing to the head, Christianity by educating the heart. To dispense with the means to an end is practically to abandon the end itself, and this is what the world is now doing. One after another, the essential dogmas of Christianity are being quietly put aside as fond inventions and forgeries of superstition, until we find even the Divinity of Christ denied by those who profess to follow Him. Divide up Christ into the Christ of Faith and the Christ of History and you have no Christ at all. Better than this

blasphemous mockery were it to exclaim with the Jews of old: "Away with Him, crucify Him." That position is, at any rate, intelligible; the Modernists have not even that merit.

That is where we stand to-day, truly, it may be said, at the parting of the ways. Some sort of religion, it would appear, men must have. Why, then, should they reject Christianity and follow after these new strange gods, the creation of their own disordered imagination? With Augustine of Hippo I would say to these searchers after mental repose: Seek what you seek, but seek it not where you seek it. Seek it in Christ our peace.

XV

A TRIPLE ALLIANCE

In the broader sense of the word, religion is clearly as necessary to the individual, as it has always been found essential to the well-being of Society. There have always been, and there probably will always be, rebels against an established or, if you like, conventional religion of a particular sort, just as there will always be malcontents who are for ever seeking to destroy existing social conditions with reckless disregard of future embarrassments. Such people generally arrogate to themselves the proud title of Reformers, but, as a rule, destruction rather than construction is the end of their endeavours. They are, in fact, little better than pessimists who look for ever on the dark side of things, or officious busybodies anxious to meddle in everybody else's affairs.

But this matter of religion is a serious one, far more serious than the anti-religionists quite realise. They talk lightly and gaily of "childish superstitions," and "antiquated dogmas," yet their case against religion, in its special sense, rests entirely upon a set of assumptions, a

bundle of opinions which, in the aggregate, make up their own religion, much as they dislike to be told so.

Life has a nasty knack of disillusioning us; in other words, as we grow from childhood to manhood, we inevitably lose many of those beliefs which, as children, we cherished so confidently. But we do not merely lose or outgrow them. We replace them by others. No man's mind is an absolute blank. And if we take away from him his faith in the supernatural, we do not thereby deprive him of the faculty of believing. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an absolute negation. A man may deny, but his denial is merely another form of affirming, and the most materialistic thinker that ever lived would probably admit that he believed in the evidence of his senses.

In one way or another, then, every man holds fast to a belief in something, and the tendency of every individual is to exalt his belief into a religion, in the sense that he affirms his belief, and no other, to be the truth.

In the last century, the most scientifically materialistic age that, I suppose, the world has ever known, it became the fashion to turn Science, not only into a religion, with prophets and dogmas all complete, but almost, it might be said, into a god. If Science and true religion contradicted each other at any point, and in those days such issues were constantly arising,

the question was supposed to be settled without further discussion on the *ipse dixit* of Science. It did not seem to occur to the wise men of that day that Science itself was merely a tentative system, often a working hypothesis only, liable at any moment to be upset in any department by further discoveries. Or perhaps I should rather say, there was a tacit understanding among materialists that scientific progress must, in the nature of things, take a course farther and farther away from religion.

And the most curious part of the matter was that the scientific prophets, whose whole system had been built up by many years of patient endeavour and investigation into natural causes, adopted a wholly unscientific attitude towards workers who wished to investigate on any other lines save those which were formally proposed by the scientists themselves. If a man, for instance, laid it down as a theory that prayer had a real dynamic force, quite apart, I mean, from any theological virtue it might possess, the nineteenth century professor would refuse even to argue with the theorist. Science, he would say, denied the possibility of such a thing and that was enough. Science, in fact, postulated a revelation that demanded as much unquestioning faith and obedience as any religion has ever done.

The discoveries of the last generation have produced a tremendous change in this attitude,

and Science, amazed and bewildered by its own "many inventions," is now in a state to refuse belief to no marvel, to accept almost any miracle, and most decidedly to examine impartially the claims of every investigator into its most dubious by-paths. Science, in fact, has travelled so fast, and in such a totally different direction from that anticipated by its nineteenth century prophets, that it is running the risk of becoming too credulous rather than too agnostic.

The Christian who bases his beliefs on other authority than the verdict of his intellectual contemporaries, and who is not disturbed by confident pronouncements which are quite likely to be upset in a few years, can afford to smile at the somersaults which scientific men are continually turning in these days. And if we smile at the so-called "science" of our ancestors, may not our descendants be equally amused at the theories and guesses of our own age?

The truth is that Science is constantly interfering in matters which are not her province at all. It is the business of Science to deal with phenomena, to find out and present facts; it is the province of Philosophy to investigate causes; and it is the duty of Religion to bring home to man the why and wherefore of his life, to put before him the solution of the great problem of existence.

Between these three no antagonism ought to exist. On the contrary, they should be united

in a strong Triple Alliance, equally respected and revered by all of us.

Science, Philosophy and Religion are three outstanding figures linked hand in hand. If I question Science and ask her to tell me something belonging to her own domain, I shall accept her answer so far as she can give me reason for doing so. It is when the so-called scientist passes out of his own realm that I am a little in fear about him. We are living in an age when nobody is allowed to confess his ignorance, and, when some great question of theology is mooted, there is always a Marie Corelli or a Hall Caine to solve it.

Now what has Science to tell me about this life? Science tells me that this puny, petty planet, set in this vast archipelago of the universe, was once a ball of fire, tossed off a ball of fire larger still; that, as it gyrated round the bigger ball, rotating on its own axis, it gradually cooled and settled down into the likeness and form of this globe whereon we live.

Now Science, having said so much, has finished her task. She can retire, and the Philosopher may come forward and I will ask him: "Sir, it is your province to investigate causes; I want to know who set this ball spinning, who is the Prime Mover of the prime thing moved?"

He will tell me that he accepts phenomena, and when the last link has dropped from the

Scientist's hand, he picks it up and finds that the thing moved must have been started by Someone having the power to move it. And when he says so, Religion will step forth and, grasping the hands of both her sisters, Science and Philosophy, will confirm the truth of their utterances, and will reveal to them as much as may be known of the nature and the intentions of the Prime Mover.

Nobody mistrusts the first-class scientist or philosopher. Such men as Newton, or Faraday, or Kelvin never attacked religion. It is the second-rate people who are always starting up and treating the Almighty as though He were some constitutional monarch, dependent on a plebiscite of His Empire, and telling Him exactly what He may or may not do.

Well now, once again, wanting to know things, I address myself to Science. I find we are made up of mind, of heart, of will; mind the seat of knowledge, heart the seat of love, and will the seat of action; and these three forces result in one strong force—the man who wants to know, and to get to the bottom of things.

Accordingly, I ask Science: "What can you tell me about life?" And if Science is in a normal state, and has not temporarily lost her head, she will say: "I know little about life. I can label it with many names, but I know no more about the beginning of life than I do

about the primitive nebula, and that is just nothing at all."

But Science will also tell me that there was a time when this little planet tossed round and round in its feverish excitement with a temperature so high that it could tolerate no life at all upon its bosom. Yet life appeared. Whence and how did it appear? Science can only say that nobody knows anything about life except as the offspring of pre-existing life.

I turn to the Philosopher. "Well," he will say, "the only explanation I have to offer is this: that some tremendous force, dowered with self-existence, must have stooped over this mineral world, and, brooding over it, breathed into its substance the breath of His own life, so that the planet began to pulsate with a life of its own."

If this, then, is the teaching of Philosophy, and if Science has no teaching to offer, what prevents them once more joining hands with Religion, across the threshold of revealed Truth and accepting in all humbleness that answer which was given of old to man's questionings, wherein we are told that God breathed into the clay the breath of life, and man became a living soul? But there is still a third question I wish to ask of Science and Philosophy. I want to know when is this planet to have done with its mad spinning? What is going to be the upshot of all this? What is the meaning of all this

fret, and fume, and fever? What of this existence which, even at midday, is a nightmare to so many of us? Whither are we going? What is to happen to us?

And Science will answer, honestly enough: "All I know is that within a certain limited time this little planet, as you say, fuming and fretting its fevered life, will quiet down, and its pulse will cease to beat, and no life shall be able any more to breathe upon it. Whether it will be burnt up or burnt out I cannot tell, but I know that its fate is certain."

"Tell, me then," I ask, "what is it that is to be buried? That long procession which started so many thousands of years ago, that long procession—is it carrying out the living soul or the dead body?"

"I cannot tell you," says Science. "Neither my scalpel, nor my microscope, nor my test tube have yet discovered a human soul—I know nothing about it." That, I say again, is an honest answer, beyond which Science cannot go. Science cannot prove a negative, and the scientist, who, because he cannot find the soul, denies its existence, has no right to call himself a scientist at all.

And now, Philosopher, come forward and give us the result of your investigations into these high, psychological questions. Tell us what conclusions you have formed about the soul.

And he will reply: "Why, all I know is this: that there is something in man's nature which appears to transcend his earthly part, some spiritual force which distinguishes him from the rest of creation, some immaterial consciousness which provides reasons for his thoughts and actions on a basis which nature alone is insufficient to furnish. That this soul is something apart from his merely animal side appears to me to be proved. I cannot affirm of my own unaided knowledge that it is an immortal entity, but the evidence would seem to be strongly in favour of such an assumption."

Then once more Religion steps forward, as the crown of both Science and Philosophy, and, in answer to the immemorial yearnings of mankind, teaches that the world has not been left in utter darkness in these matters—that there is sure ground for that Hope and Faith which have never wholly deserted the earth, and that the warrant for these things comes from a source that cannot be doubted. Thus it is Religion, Faith, that gives man his true orientation and makes life worth while.

> "The highest faith makes still the highest man,
> For we grow like the things our souls believe,
> And rise or sink as we aim high or low."

XVI

SATANIC SPIRITISM

It is only after considerable hesitation that I have decided to include the following articles in this book. Many of my readers, I know, will consider the whole subject of "Spiritualism" to be entirely unworthy of serious notice, and I should be the last to urge anyone to depart from that attitude. The less we have to do with séances and "spirits," the better for our moral and mental health. On the other hand it is useless to shut one's eyes to the enormous influence which the new "cult" exercises over very many thousands of people today, and those by no means confined to the ignorant or half-educated classes. A well-known investigator into psychic matters has given it as his opinion, founded on a long and varied experience, that "ninety-eight per cent. of the phenomena are fraudulent." I think, myself, the figure is rather too high, but in any case the fact that so great an authority admits the genuineness of even a proportion of phenomena should serve as a warning to honest Christian believers to avoid "Spiritualism" as they would the

plague. The evil is a growing one and the dangers to which it opens the door are literally appalling; and I do not think it would be right for me to pass by in silence practices which are all the more harmful inasmuch as they seem specially devised to attract many who are honestly, if misguidedly, seeking the truth.

I.—The Fraudulent

When we consider that fraud enters so largely into Spiritualistic séances, it might be thought sufficient for me to utter a word of warning on this aspect of the subject and pass on to more serious matters at once. But I am inclined to dwell a little longer on this side of Spiritualism, for two excellent reasons. In the first place there are numbers of credulous persons who have never come into contact with any genuine phenomena at all and yet are among the most enthusiastic followers of the cult; and secondly, in nearly every instance where an inquirer, drawn either by curiosity or by some blind groping after the truth, begins to attend séances, it will be found that his ultimate devotion to the whole pernicious system rests on the humbug and charlatanry of a fraudulent medium. Certain things happen which to him are inexplicable, though any clever conjurer could duplicate them, and he at once rushes to the conclusion that he has seen the "spirits" at work.

A blind belief in fraudulent phenomena, therefore, may do a very real amount of harm to a trusting soul, even if the results cannot in the nature of things be quite so deadly as those produced by the presence of genuine spirits. There are certain people whose attitude towards the whole subject is exactly the reverse of that adopted by the materialistic school of the last century. Tyndall, for instance, having gone to a séance and having observed that the phenomena produced were clearly fraudulent, laid it down that there could be nothing supernatural about any manifestation. The modern inquirer, primed with thrilling stories of his friends' experiences, attends a medium's circle, is bewildered and impressed by the phenomena shown, which, knowing little or nothing of mediumistic methods, he cannot account for, and incontinently jumps to the conclusion that everything is the work of the spirits of whom he has been told such marvels.

Thenceforth, he is an easy prey to every professional fortune-teller, every self-styled clairvoyant whom he may come across. Nothing is too much for him to swallow. He fondly imagines himself to be in constant communication with the souls of departed friends and relatives. Forgetful of the pure beliefs of his childhood, he now considers himself for the first time fully assured of a life after death, and he naturally takes the advice of his "spirit-guides" as to how

he shall conduct himself with a view to his own comfort, both here and hereafter. I confess I have small sympathy with the man who, after some years of this sort of thing, finds himself beggared in pocket and with his faith in human nature rudely shaken. He may be thankful that matters are no worse and that he has found out his mistake in time. If when he realises the truth, he hastily decides, like Tyndall, that the whole of Spiritualism is a gigantic fraud and resolves to dabble no more in such things, then, I say, so much the better for him. The materialistic, common-sense position, where Spiritualism is concerned, is a far safer one than sheer blind credulity.

If only these ardent seekers after the supernatural would take the trouble to read some of the books that have been published explaining the methods of fraudulent mediums, they would at least have the satisfaction of detecting for themselves many of the clever conjuring tricks on which so much of Spiritualism rests. Such books have been published in abundance, but the credulous believer refuses, I must suppose, to read them.

One such was recently expatiating to me on the physical marvels shown at a séance he had recently attended. As a matter of fact, it was not, as séances go, such a very wonderful performance, and I had little difficulty in explaining the *modus operandi* of every trick he

mentioned. But I failed to convince him that everything he had witnessed could be explained on purely natural grounds. He admitted that my explanations covered the facts, but, he went on to say, "There was something in the atmosphere, some wholly indescribable feeling of being actually in touch with a higher sphere (why "higher"?) that forced one to the conclusion that all was genuine."

I have come across the same thing dozens of times. The wish to believe makes all things easy—from the medium's point of view—and a lady once assured me quite seriously that though the "spirit-friends" she was accustomed to renew acquaintance with at séances were never identically the same as she remembered them in life, there was always an indescribable air about them which entirely satisfied her that they were what they represented themselves to be!

As a matter of fact, no evidence has ever been advanced that a "materialisation" is ever produced by anything but the grossest fraud. The late Mr. W. T. Stead, a confirmed Spiritualist, admitted as much upon one occasion. "The phenomena of Spiritualism," he wrote, "so far as relates to the materialising of spirits, seem to be much less frequent in London at present than they were some years ago. During these investigations I have made great efforts to obtain the services of a trustworthy materialising medium, who had not at any time

been detected in fraud. There are three or four materialising mediums who give séances in London; but, whether from misfortune or their own fault, their names have all been associated at one time or another with the production of fraudulent phenomena. I am not now speaking of what is said by such opponents of spiritualistic phenomena as . . . Mr. Maskelyne. I am speaking of what has been communicated to me by fervent Spiritualists, whom I have consulted in the hope that they might be able to furnish me with the address of a trustworthy materialising medium. The net result of my inquiries came to this: that, in the whole of the United Kingdom, so far as was known to the spiritualistic community, there was only one person of undoubted materialising faculty and undoubted character who could almost always secure the presence cf phenomena, and who had never been detected in a trick of any kind."

The medium referred to by Mr. Stead in this remarkable paragraph he reveals as Mrs. Mellon, a medium who, as a matter of fact, was actually exposed in Sydney, Australia, two years after Mr. Stead's admission quoted above. Mr. Hereward Carrington quotes, in "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism," a first-hand account of this exposure at a séance where several sceptics had agreed to seize one of the "spirits" issuing from the cabinet in order to

ascertain whether the form seen was genuine, or was, as appeared likely, that of Mrs. Mellon herself in disguise. Here is the story as given by Mr. Carrington: Mr. Henry, one of the sceptics, seized the figure as it came from the cabinet, and then, in his own words, "found that I held the form of Mrs. Mellon, and that she was on her knees, and had a white material like muslin round her head and shoulders. I can swear positively that when I seized the form Mrs. Mellon was on her knees. She struggled, but I held her firmly and called for the light to be turned up. Someone struck matches, and then I saw that Mrs. Mellon had a mask of black material over her face, and aforesaid white drapery round her shoulders, her sleeves drawn up above the elbows, the skirt of her dress turned up and her feet bare. . . . The matches were blown out, and I was assaulted by two or three men present, Mr. Mellon catching me by the throat and tearing off my necktie. I never let go my hold on Mrs. Mellon, however, until the gas in the back room was lit and turned full on, and everyone present had an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Mellon in the position and in the condition in which I had caught her. I looked inside the cabinet, and saw, lying upon the floor (inside the cabinet), a false beard. I called Mr. Roydhouse over, and he picked up the beard, but it was snatched from his hand.

As soon as I released my hold, Mrs. Mellon tore the black mask from her face and the drapery from her shoulders, and hid them under her petticoat."

This plain story, taken in conjunction with Mr. Stead's significant declaration, is pretty conclusive proof that cases of supposed materialisation are nearly always fraudulent. As for the so-called "messages" obtained by such mechanical means as slate-writing, sealed letters and so forth, these methods have been exposed so often that, quite apart from the insanity of the "messages" themselves, only the most obstinately credulous can possibly suppose such phenomena due to anything but the trickery of the medium.

Yet on such a basis, only too often, has the restlessness of our age erected what its followers regard as a real "religion." It is, I suppose, hopeless for an ordinary sane person to endeavour to understand the mental state of the individual who, at one moment appeals to the Bible as proving the reality of the phenomena of the séance-room and, at another, claims that such phenomena "confirm" the truths taught in the Bible. I shall have occasion later to refer to the nature of the "messages" that purport to come from another sphere of existence. Suffice it here to say that they are all either meaningless or actually harmful, and that the ones which are given as a "test" of the

supposed spirits' identity are, as a rule, the most untrustworthy of all.

II.—The Frivolous

If modern science still refuses to take the claims of Spiritualism seriously, there are many scientific men who admit that a certain proportion of the phenomena are genuine, i.e. are not the product of conscious fraud. And there can be little doubt that a great many communications which are supposed to emanate from those in "spirit-land" are evolved from the sub-consciousness either of the medium or of the sitters. It is not always easy to distinguish these from those which are actually fraudulent, but, so far as the Spiritualist is concerned, the distinction is of very little importance. If the sometimes high-flown and sometimes inane messages which purport to come from "Aunt Mary" or "Uncle John" can be shown to have an entirely natural origin, surely it is only reasonable to ask the Spiritualist for what cause he prefers to place his confidence in these dubious guides rather than in those who can show him firmer ground for belief.

I propose in this chapter to quote a few extracts which have been in all seriousness put forward as actual communications from the spirit-world by prominent men since their death. They may be altogether fraudulent productions

or they may have been evolved from the subconsciousness of some enterprising inquirer in these fields. I know nothing of the circumstances under which they were obtained, but I do know that anyone reading them in cold blood and with an impartial mind will acknowledge that they are certainly not what they purport to be, and if the perusal of them tends to make anyone inclined towards Spiritualism throw up the whole subject in disgust, they will have served my purpose. I class them, I may add, as "frivolous," because, though occasionally pretentious in tone, they are hopelessly childish and emphatically not in the least worthy of the distinguished names attached to them.

I will give pride of place to William Shakespeare, both by reason of his literary achievements and because he has been dead so long that it is a little remarkable that he should still take an interest in mundane matters. Shakespeare has, moreover, got something really curious to tell us. He did not, it appears—and as many worthy moderns have long suspected—write his plays himself. But Bacon was not the author, either. Let me give you the facts of the case in Shakespeare's own words.

"I was spiritually controlled. I was never myself either in acting or writing. Every word of 'King Lear' I wrote, hearing the words audiently. 'Coriolanus' was another play I wrote after my retirement from London; I

wrote this hearing it clair-audiently. 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' was written through my hand in nearly illegible characters. I had been with Drayton and Ben Jonson, having a social glass together, and after our carousal, for it finished with one, I stopped at the inn where it took place, and filled seventy-four sheets of manuscript from 2 a.m. to 4.35. This was the 'Merry Wives of Windsor.'" . . .

"I wrote, 'Venus and Adonis' under control, also 'Coriolanus' and 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Five plays I think I wrote in all; I was thoroughly controlled when I wrote, and when anyone came in at any time before I was restored to consciousness, they would be struck and pass remarks upon my want of attentiveness, they would charge me with an absence of consciousness. I put it all down to meditativeness; I knew it was something beyond myself, but I dared not mention it. I was always deemed eccentric. I was right royal in my friendships, and indifferent to those for whom I felt no partiality; in fact, I was a man of extremes, a Sensitive, a term which embraces all the eccentricities of a soul tabernacled in clay."

I am afraid Shakespeare's literary style has deteriorated a little during the three hundred years he has spent in the "Spiritland," and this is the more remarkable since he has not lacked, it appears, for congenial company in his "sphere." For he continues: "I have seen Spenser spiritu-

ally; I am in the same sphere with Ben Jonson and Drayton, and Pope, the eccentric, gloomy soul, is with us. Cardinal Wolsey is also one of our sphere—we have also got artists, sculptors, and the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, is also with us."

Asked, apparently on another occasion, what other great men were with him, he became a trifle impatient.

"Great men?" he exclaimed. "What you call greatness pertains only to the earth. That which the world calls greatness is too often a sepulchre without a tenant, a shell without a kernel, or only a dried and withered one within. We see that he alone is great who is great interiorly. A name is often a millstone hung round one's neck. Ah! what a sham the world is!"

To which unexceptionable sentiment we can only cry "hear, hear," and pass on to the next name on our list, that of Thomas Carlyle. He also has a list of his associates to give us.

"I have seen and conversed," he says, "with Frederick the Great, with Voltaire and Rousseau; with Napoleon the First; with the bloodthirsty Robespierre; with Marat and the leaders of the first French Revolution; with Richter, Goethe, and Schiller, with Byron, Coleridge, and Shelley. I was not in harmony with the age in which I lived, its trivialities vexed my soul. I belonged to the past. Schiller and

Goethe were my bosom friends. I was like a meteoric stone, flung on earth by an electrical tempest, out of place, and having no grounding soil where I was, gazed upon with wonder and not comprehended by the people around me."

Carlyle is still a little egotistical, it will be noticed. Perhaps we are to take this as evidence of his identity, and if further proof be wanted, the final outburst, à propos of nothing in particular, will surely be convincing.

"O rugged Scotland! home of my boyhood; the spirit of thy Highlanders and Lowlanders; thy love of freedom; the poverty of thy soil; thy mountains, sparsely clothed with elements to grow food, have saved thee from the rapacity of the rich and noble. Thy Kirk-bells have rung out their harsh theology without breaking the spirit of Hope dominant in thy people."

I append a communication supposed to come from John Dryden—in itself about the most fatuous string of platitudes that anyone could put together. It is only of interest as showing the credulity of the misguided enthusiasts who can persuade themselves into the belief that such stuff has really been communicated by Dryden's spirit.

"Ah! time passes along, and immortal souls are, by its mandate, transferred from earth to another and higher state of existence. Time brings many changes on the face of the earth—the stately city of the past is the ruin of the

present; the child of yesterday is the grey-haired and decrepit old man of to-day; the earth knows that soul in the form no more; but, however surprising these changes may seem, no change wrought by time is so great as when time once more embraces the atoms which form the body, the soul's abiding-place on earth; thus giving that soul its liberty—I say its liberty either to see and lament, or to rejoice and be glad. . . . Yes, it is a great and nearly indescribable change."

I cannot refrain, at the risk of wearying the reader, from adding one more message. It purports to be from Lord Beaconsfield, but I think a fourth-form schoolboy could have done better if he had been set the task of giving us an imaginary message from the deceased statesman.

"Since I left the earth I have been in a position analogous to a person looking through a diminishing glass. I rode on the wave of popularity, the Prime Minister of England and Privy Councillor of the Queen, honoured for the moment, the literary curiosity, applauded as a giant in intellect, as a courtier, as a favourite of fortune, and one whom the gods delighted to honour. From this exalted position I was suddenly thrust down. The smiles of kings and princes, the applause of the multitude were withdrawn, and thus my life was an epitome of all life. I took the lesson that was taught me silently, and again turned my attention to

literature. Here, said I, man may become immortal; here public favour is enduring, and does not applaud one day and stab its victim the next.

"But I had one more lesson to learn. Another change occurred in my horoscope. The star of my life set on earth to rise dimly in another sphere of existence. And now, from this Cloud-land, I look through the diminishing atmosphere between the two worlds, to find my *mirage* on earth is reduced to a mere speck. The pale primroses of spring are the only mementoes that are left of Beaconsfield. What a lesson of the mutations of life—a lesson that should be studied by all popular favourites who live on the breath of the multitude. The policy of the present English Government towards Ireland is a question that now deeply interests the inhabitants of the Spiritual Spheres."

I am afraid that last sentence may sound a trifle abrupt, but perhaps it was thrown in as evidence of identity.

Some Spiritualists will protest that I am doing them an injustice when I quote such messages as these as typical of the ones on which they have founded their faith. They may even go so far as to admit that they are not wholly satisfied as to the spirit-identity of Shakespeare or Beaconsfield. But that is of no importance. What, they will tell you, admits of no discussion is the fact that they have seen, or at all events

talked with, the spirits of various friends and relatives who have "passed over."

When analysed, such conversations are found to be not only entirely "non-evidential," as the psychic researchers put it, but are chiefly confined to recalling trivial matters known to both parties which, as Spiritualists assert, are the best possible proof of identity. But is there, amid all the mass of published records of séances, one single case (of this sort) which could not be readily explained on other grounds? Mr. Hereward Carrington, to whom I have already referred, has some interesting remarks in one of his books on this point. He is speaking more particularly of "trance-mediums."

"Once the genuine nature of the trance state be granted, and the fact that the messages that come through the medium's mouth (automatic utterance), or hand (automatic writing), are not the products of conscious fraud, there is opened before us a problem the extent of which no man can fathom. That does not necessarily mean that the messages which are delivered in the trance state are spirit messages —not by any means; they may be the result of the activity of the secondary consciousness of the medium, active at the time, and passing itself off as a spirit—the super-normal knowledge displayed being gained by means of telepathy, clairvoyance, and such super-normal processes, and woven together by the medium's secondary

consciousness to personate a spirit. We know that this is frequently done, the analogy of hypnotically induced personalities guiding us in the investigation of these trance personalities."

The majority of convinced Spiritualists, it must be confessed, trouble themselves little about theories of this sort, but accept everything, except the palpably fraudulent, and even that very often, as the work of the "spirits." Nothing incenses a Spiritualist of this sort so deeply as a hint that he is taking too much on trust, and he can seldom find words bitter enough to hurl at those who, for whatever reason, deprecate psychical research altogether.

It might be urged that it is better that a man should be led towards a belief in a future life even by such dubious ways rather than remain a rank materialist with no thought outside the concerns of this world. As a fact, that is a matter that does not require to be discussed, for your out-and-out materialist is not of the type to frequent séances. He sets down the whole phenomena of Spiritualism as mere humbug and trickery, and no conjuring performances will shake his disbelief.

No. Oddly, and sadly, enough it is the professing Christian who runs after these extraneous aids to prop his feeble faith, who finds in the paraphernalia of the séance-room an acceptable substitute for attendance at church, and who prefers to be instructed in his religious

duties and his moral conduct by mysterious communications from an unknown source rather than seek spiritual aid and sustenance from the words of Christ and those appointed to continue His teaching.

III.—The Fiendish

I come to the gravest part of my present subject. If Spiritualism could be definitely proved to be nothing but an agglomeration of clever conjuring tricks, or if Science could show, beyond cavil, that the stirring of our sub-conscious selves was responsible for every manifestation of the séance-room, the whole matter might be left to a natural death, and we could trust the sound common-sense of humanity to recover its equilibrium in no very long time.

Unhappily, that is not the case. There is a considerable and, I fear, an increasing proportion of phenomena which owe their direct origin to the action of visitors from another sphere than ours.

No reasonable man, who undertakes an impartial investigation into the mass of evidence collected on the subject, can doubt the fact. I have neither the time nor the space to examine this evidence here, nor is it indeed necessary, for this chapter has not been written to convince the mocking materialist, but rather to warn the devotees of Spiritualism against the dangers, physical, mental, and moral, which they are

incurring through their ignorant playing with fire.

Spiritualists, I know, do not receive these warnings kindly. They are furious at the bare suggestion that the spirits with whom they are in touch are not what they assert themselves to be. And if they be further told that such spirits are lying spirits, are devilish and Satanic in their origin, they indignantly demand proof of the charge. Would it not be more to the point if the Spiritualists could bring proof that they were not? It is a favourite assertion of these people that only debased minds get *en rapport* with debased spirits, and that the more spiritually minded an inquirer is, the purer and more elevated are the spirits who come in answer to his call. But how is it proposed to differentiate between the Satanic and the Saintly Spirit? Easily enough, declares the Spiritualist, for the evil spirits are readily distinguished by their irreverent, even blasphemous remarks and their malicious doings, whereas those from higher spheres are full of lofty sentiments and their communications are always couched in solemn and holy language.

Cannot a spirit then, as well as a man, be a hypocrite? Would a lying spirit, seeking to pervert mankind, hesitate to give voice to such sentiments as might be best calculated to deceive its hearers into accepting it as a trustworthy and truthful authority on the unseen world? The

plain fact of the matter is that the man who accepts the teaching of the spirits and regulates his religious belief and his conduct thereby, ceases to be a Christian in any real sense of the term. He may still call himself a follower of Christ, but the Christ he elects to follow is not the Divine Man of the Gospel, but a monstrous caricature—an antichrist in fact—who is held up for his veneration as merely a man somewhat in advance of his time by virtue of his superior mediumistic powers.

A well-known investigator into this subject, Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert, whose book on the "Dangers of Spiritualism" should be carefully studied by every professing Spiritualist, has given us a general résumé of the usual tenor of spirit messages. I quote the following passage:

"Many of them (the spirits) know nothing of God: others employ a phraseology which would tend to destroy all faith in God, and duty, and responsibility, and which would seem to indicate that they have, since their translation into the next sphere of being, sunk to a decidedly lower level of moral and religious thought. The tendency of their utterances is, most certainly, in many directions, towards the removal of the sanction of religion, and to the creation in other minds of doubt in the existence of God."

I will supplement this statement with one or

two instances of communications from spirits on the subject of God and religion. Answering a singularly foolish question as to why the Creator of the human infant could create a leopard to mangle and destroy that infant, one spirit is reported to have said: "You will yet learn that there were many Creators. This fact is referred to in your sacred writings, where the Gods say, 'Let *us* make man in *our* image and after *our* likeness"!

That answer is characteristic of these so-called "spirit-guides" and "teachers." The words of Scripture are ever in their mouths, and in every case, with truly diabolical ingenuity, they twist and torture the meaning of the sacred texts to suit their own purposes.

The subjoined extract from another spirit-message will illustrate the subtle and insidious fashion in which the spirits work to cast doubt on the truths of revealed religion:

"All progress has its culminating point.

"Æons have passed to produce the most exquisite crystals, the highest forms of vegetation, of animals, of men. Then came the slow processes of civilising and educating men; the dim instincts of fear and propitiation, merging, by slow degrees, in the first conceptions of love, as something apart from desire, and so forth.

"Was I to be expected to shut my eyes to all these known facts, and bolt down the

theories contained in one Book, written by human authors, no matter how admirable?

"I felt it was impossible.

"Then I remembered with relief that these very dogmas, as a matter of fact, were in so fluent a state, that my own bare fifty years of living had seen at least four different high-water marks!

"Here again, therefore, under my very eyes, was the universal law of progress working, the moment it *could* work, by being released from the swaddling-clothes of the Roman Catholic Church, which, so far as it is orthodox, is fossilised."

And again (from the same message): "And so you have gone on see-sawing to and fro, not really believing the old orthodox ideas, but not courageously sweeping them away for yourself."

Over and over again in such messages we find the same idea repeated, the same crafty appeal made to those listening to free their minds from the "bonds of creeds," to take "broader views of theology," and so forth. Seldom has the person thus appealed to the strength to resist the implied flattery that he is at too high an intellectual or spiritual level to be satisfied with the common notions of religion which are good enough for the rest of mankind.

Here is another sample of the kind of diabolical perversion to which I am referring:

"As we grow older and become more developed in spiritual consciousness, so do we tend more and more to worship the inner and intangible, rather than the outward and manifest . . . Those limitations which once made for reverence are in time found to be cramping and to lead to superstition . . . The old ideas of Heaven and Hell are already doomed, but other ideas, equally untrue from the literal point of view, still hold their own, and will be more slowly eradicated It is well this should be so. The world at large is not prepared yet to take this further step."

"Tell your friend," teaches another spirit, "not to be afraid of a broader outlook in all religious matters, nor fear the psychic questions which interest her. Truth must come out of all earnest search for it, and if you widen your outlook while on earth, you will have less to unlearn when you pass to this side."

In other words, we are exhorted to give up that belief in Christianity which has sustained and strengthened the lives of men for the last two thousand years; we are taught, agreeably with the spirit of the age, that the more we "broaden our views," and the sooner we escape from the "trammels of orthodoxy," the greater progress we shall make in the spiritual life; and, finally, we are told that while the old Christian dogmas were well enough in their way for a childish and ignorant age, it behoves

us, now that we have reached intellectual manhood, to take a more "liberal" view of Divinity.

Can any practising Christian soberly accept such teaching as a new revelation? What grounds has he for setting aside the express and explicit commands of Christ in favour of the vague and nebulous exhortations of lying spirits, whose sole claim to speak with authority rests on their ability to move a table or take possession of a medium? That the spirits continually contradict themselves and each other, that at one moment they will affect to speak with reverence of the Saviour and at the next give the lie to His every word, apparently matters not at all to their deluded victims.

Is there any possible escape from the dilemma that these spirits are either messengers from God or the direct emissaries of Satan? And if the internal evidence of their communications is not sufficient, as alas, we know it is not, to convince inquirers of their evil nature, how comes it that God, having once and for all sent His Son upon earth to establish a Church which shall, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, be a living witness to the truth—how comes it, I say, that God now finds it necessary to correct and modify His Son's Gospel by the mouths of a host of messengers who are unable to establish their own identity?

Let me quote one more extract from one

of these spirit-messages, purporting, in high-sounding phraseology, to give the spirits' own reason for their activity.

"We come to you beings of earth to do something more than merely to prove our existence in another sphere, and to present wonders to marvel-seekers. We mean serious and practical work for human enlightenment and progress. We come to teach a truer, brighter, and better philosophy of life than the world has yet had to aid you in the solution of the great problems of your being; to inspire you with higher aims and nobler efforts for your own and for others' good; to give you the benefit of our larger experience that you may be incited to make the most and best of your earthly opportunities; and to do what we can to correct your errors and to educate you for the practical duties of both the present and the future life."

Had Our Lord, then, nothing to teach men on the correction of their errors—the word "sin," you may note, is carefully avoided—had He nothing to propose on their education for the practical duties of both the present and the future life? It would seem not, if we are to put our trust in the spirits who promise us "enlightenment and progress," and who "come to teach a truer, brighter, and better philosophy of life than the world has yet had." If that phrase does not contain the most explicit denial of the Christian revelation that it is possible to

have, I should like to hear one put more plainly.

Such a communication as this, and it is typical of many others, is, I say it emphatically, nothing more or less than the work of the Devil. It bears upon the face of it every mark of its diabolical origin and a man must have strayed far indeed from the teachings of Christ to be deceived by such miserable and lying bombast.

IV.—Cui Bono?

From the higher religious standpoint it is clear that Spiritualism has nothing to recommend it, but that, on the contrary, much harm may, and does, result to its followers. There are, too, the physical efforts to be considered, of which, alas, those who dabble in Spiritualism hear little or nothing until some devastating tragedy at their own doors, so to speak, tears the veil from their eyes. Once a man ventures the frail bark of his soul near the quicksands of occultism, his doom is sealed almost as surely as that of the vessel driven on the Goodwins. It matters little whether it be curiosity or superstition or bereavement that first brings a man or woman into "spirit-circles." The result is in nearly all cases the same, loss of physical control, loss of mental balance, loss of moral sense.

There is no room in this work-a-day world for the Spiritualist. At the best he becomes

engrossed and absorbed by the fascination exercised by his occult pursuits, to the extinction of all other interests in life. At the worst he ends his days in a mad-house. If only the physical havoc and ruin which the craze after spiritualistic séances is creating among all classes of the community were generally known and realised, perhaps it is not too much to hope that even the Spiritualists themselves would not resent so bitterly the warnings addressed to them by responsible and level-headed advisers.

Remembering the many cases of moral ruin and physical wreckage which have come before me as a result of these practices, I would not, if I could, remain tongue-tied. I cannot forget how a young mother, being told that her dead child wanted to speak to her, was drawn to a séance and became almost enchanted because she thought she recognised its innocent prattle. Strange child, which led her first by the ways of piety and prayer, and finally to give up all religion and believe in nothing but the grossest superstition and folly.

Nor can I forget the working man who went to a séance in the hope of communicating with his dead wife, and of obtaining consolation and advice from her, and who had become so pestered and tempted by lying and obscene spirits that he was driven into an asylum, whence he emerged only again to re-enter it.

I recall another case, that of a young wife

and her brother, who out of curiosity began by indulging in crystal-gazing, palmistry, divination by means of Tarot cards and other so-called operations, and then got into the habit of attending séances. There as they were persuaded, they were raised to the astral plane, had intercourse with angels, and finally with Our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, who confessed to them that He was only a man in advance of His time. Both brother and sister have not only given up their religion but are now rabid anti-Christians.

A man came to me the other day and, telling me of his terrible trouble, of how his wife had gone to a lunatic asylum through dabbling in Spiritualism, begged me with tears in his eyes to do all I could to stop this devilry, which seems to gather new strength every day, and whose insidious methods are all directed to belittle and undermine the Church of Christ.

I could multiply instances of the devastating effects of this blasphemous cult, and those who are inclined to think the results exaggerated will do well to read the cases recorded by Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert in his book on the "Dangers of Spiritualism," from which I have already quoted. The saner investigators who look upon psychical research from the strictly scientific point of view, the examination of which may help to solve the problems presented by such recently discovered facts as telepathy, hypnotism,

the sub-conscious mind and so forth, are thoroughly agreed as to the dangers, mental, moral and physical, which are incurred by those who are attracted to it from other causes.

Once a man opens the door of his soul to such influences, who can say what visitors may not enter? Cases of actual obsession are far more frequent than Spiritualists imagine or will admit, and no one who has ever come across a single instance of the kind can ever again have any feeling towards Spiritualism but one of shuddering aversion.

To put the case on the very lowest grounds, of what possible benefit can this spirit communication be to the world at large? The return—or the supposed return—of friends and relatives we have lost in years gone by, is cited as a proof that there is another world than this, that we do not wholly die when we depart this life, and that there is a nobler side of us which still lives a conscious existence when our bodies are shut up in the coffin and left to moulder in the grave. But since when has a Christian required such proof? At what period of history has the Church ever taught that men perish as the beasts in the field? And what kind of religious faith is that which needs to be fortified by the utterances of spirits who, at the best, have nothing to reveal which Christianity has not taught for these nineteen hundred years and more, and who, at the worst, make the

blasphemous assertion that the highest religion is to have no religion at all?

With the argument put forward by many Spiritualists that their efforts are doing good in the direction of converting many from blank materialism to a belief in some sort of future life, I have already dealt. The thorough-going materialist, let me repeat, has no time for investigations of this sort and he certainly will not accept other people's accounts at second-hand. The inquirer, on the other hand, who honestly seeks for enlightenment from this source, will find all the evidence for the truths which he is seeking, if he consults his own conscience, his own reason and the teaching of the Church founded, so many hundreds of years ago, by Christ. And in this connection I think a sentence from Mr. Raupert's book is worth quoting: "The Spiritualistic view of the other state is but a dignified kind of materialism, which has no necessary connection with the moral life, and which chiefly appeals to that side of our nature from which high moral effort and endeavour can scarcely be looked for. The prospect of a necessary and inevitable and never-ending procession, much on the basis of the present life, is apt to lull the human soul to sleep and to rob it of that constant stimulus to a life of higher attainment and greater purity which the Christian system, and a ready obedience to the promptings of conscience, are known to create."

In fact, even if a stray Materialist should, by investigating the phenomena, succeed in convincing himself that his conscious existence would continue after death, that in itself would not provide any reason or inducement for him to nourish his moral and spiritual nature. The next world, he is informed by the spirits, is much the same as this one, while the pleasantness or unpleasantness of his surroundings there will apparently depend not on whether his life here has been a pure and virtuous one, but on the refinement or vulgarity of his tastes! The spirits will tell him nothing of God, nothing of duty, nothing of the necessity of self-discipline. They will have no message to give him concerning religion, and while it is possible that they will hint vaguely at a certain amount of discomfort to be endured by the irreclaimably vile and vicious of mankind, they will be careful to make it quite clear that a man of cultured tastes and refined temperament—such as himself—will, after death, be conducted to a delightful, if rather suspicious material, Summerland, where his intellectual and artistic requirements will be satisfied to the full. How can it benefit a man to be taught such a creed as that?

There are many Spiritualists, again, who will tell you that to hold weekly or daily converse with those they have loved and lost—as they fully believe they do—is the only thing that makes life tolerable for them. Is life, then, so

long, or have we grown so impatient of all suffering that we cannot wait trustfully for a few years till we, in our turn, shall join those beloved ones? Cannot we stand manfully and faithfully at our posts, doing our appointed work, and relying on God for the consolation and comfort that we need? If we find our duties too hard and irksome, can we not turn for help towards Him who is the source of all strength and courage? The Roman soldier, who stood to his post at the gate of Pompeii, while all the world was crashing about him into ruin, and the panic-stricken populace were crushing each other to death in their frantic struggles to escape from the doomed city, knew better what duty meant than do many of our so-called Christians to-day.

Perhaps the most amazing of all the claims put forward by Spiritualists is the assertion that it has been reserved for them alone, of all the generations of men, to make the discovery that, to use a phrase constantly in their mouths, "There is no death." We are not to understand by this, of course, that they have succeeded in abolishing the physical phenomenon of the death of the body; all they mean to imply by this juggling with words is that the soul lives on after it has quitted its tenement of flesh. Well, common sense alone taught most men that long before the days of professional mediums, and even before Christ came on earth

to redeem mankind, the nations of antiquity never quibbled much over the immortality of the soul. The chief problem that exercised them was the future life and the ultimate destiny of that soul, on which point the wisest of the old Greek philosophers is better worth listening to than the most talkative of the spirits that haunt the modern séance-room.

The heart of man is restless by nature until it finds peace in God, Who alone knows and satisfies its inmost life. What else do the restlessness and discontent and ceaseless cravings after something new, whether in the religious or social order, signify than that the world has turned away from God and is seeking vainly elsewhere for something that may for a moment soothe its jaded spirit, or satisfy its weary and worn-out senses? It is not in the séance-room that humanity will find its God awaiting it; it is not by holding converse with fraudulent or lying spirits that man will find the solution of the problem of his being; it is not by suffering himself to be made the toy and plaything of devils that man will arrive at the knowledge of the Eternal Truth.

If any of those who read these words have been attracted by curiosity, or for any other reason, to dabble, however lightly, in these things, may I beg of them very earnestly to ask themselves what possible profit it can be either to them or others to meddle with matters which

are beyond their understanding? While we have the words of Christ before us, and the teaching of the Church of Christ to guide us, how shall it advantage us to go behind either? I have already spoken briefly of the very real perils awaiting those who open the door to the inrush of the evil influences ever about us; but, apart from these, what has Spiritualism to offer to your soul in the way of spiritual nourishment in any sense comparable with the gifts of God through the Mediatorship of His Divine Son?

This chapter I have entitled "Cui Bono?" I have used the expression in its borrowed rather than in its native sense—not asking "To whom is it of use?" but rather, "What is the use of it?"

XVII

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

One of the worst faults, I have always thought, in the Englishman's character is his love of compromise. Some people regard it, I know, as almost a virtue. "Look," they exclaim, "how England has flourished under this common sense system. Here you have a country whose constitution is a compromise, whose government is a compromise, whose politics are a compromise, whose whole Empire is a compromise, and see the result. A free people, a wonderful power in the world, and a glorious Empire. Oh, the English are a great nation!"

Well, I believe they are; but I am not at all sure that they might not be greater still if that spirit of compromise had been kept within due bounds. And I am quite certain that they will not be a great nation for very much longer unless they put their foot down very decidedly, and very quickly, upon what has of late years been rapidly developing into a fixed habit.

Even in their religion, Englishmen have effected some very extraordinary compromises in the past, but it has remained for our own

day to witness the most extraordinary compromise of all—a compromise with the Almighty Himself.

The modern man has become dissatisfied with God's revelation. He admits that there is a God, but he is by no means clear in his own mind as to the relative rights of the Creator and the creature. So, in his own feeble mind, he makes a compromise. He is a free man, and he will do what seems good to him. He will taste all the pleasures and enjoyments of this world in which he finds himself, he will indulge in no foolish scruples about sin or morality, and then, when he comes to die, he will meet his God with a sure hope of being accepted at his own valuation.

"He's a good fellow, and 'twill all be well." That is the latest philosophy, the latest morality, the latest compromise. An ingenious scheme whereby a man can save himself from all prickings of his conscience, and hopes to have a good time, without bother, both here and hereafter.

Many, very many years ago, we were told that we cannot serve both God and Mammon, and for many years the world accepted the teaching. Men frankly served one or the other. But, nowadays, our superior wisdom has begun to revolt against this doctrine. Why, it is asked, if he makes himself as comfortable as he can in this world, should a man be debarred

from participating in the joys of the next? We are human beings; is it not likely enough that we are placed here to follow the bent of our own human nature? In short, God is not going to be so unjust as to punish us for a few trifling lapses; for taking our pleasures as they come; for getting what we can out of this life.

But what this sort of people never seem able to comprehend is that we cannot serve two masters whole-heartedly. There is nothing in this world, I verily believe, that a man cannot have if he chooses to pay the price. But he cannot have anything by compromise. If he wishes for the good things of this world, he must serve the world with no thought of any other master. But if his heart is set on higher things, then he must give his service to the One Who can reward him according to his self-denial.

How, then, is it possible to love both God and Mammon, to give our hearts and minds and souls unreservedly to each? Can a politician be at the same time a pronounced Liberal and a staunch Conservative? Can a patriot at the same time love his native land and plot evil against her? Can a soldier fight for and against his country simultaneously? If you wish for the world's prizes, serve the world with all your strength and they are yours. But you must not expect to be paid by two masters for the services you have rendered to one.

"Well," I can hear some one protesting, "this is all very fine, but it is mightily unpractical. After all, we have got to live in the world, for a time, at any rate, and unless we all go into monasteries, it is difficult to see how we are to avoid giving some measure of service to the world."

I admit that it is difficult, but only difficult because we are so constantly tempted to give our whole service, and not a part of it, to the world. And here we come back to the whole point of duty. We have many worldly duties to perform; we have to give our service to this master or that; we have to do many things that, on the surface, have no conceivable relation to our service to God. But it is on the surface only. For if in all our daily work we are actuated by the single-hearted motive of doing all things well and thoroughly, and for the honour of Him Who created us, then, I say, we are serving God and not the world.

In so acting, we are, it is true, ostensibly serving the world, but it is the motive which counts, the intention which is of vital importance. And it is this motive, this intention which differentiates the man who is serving God from the man who is serving the world and his own selfish interests.

This point of view solves many of our modern difficulties with regard to the social inequalities of mankind. Why should one man

serve and another rule, it is asked? Why should one be born in a position of authority and one in subjection? So far as I can see, the Socialist may continue asking that question without ever succeeding in eliciting a satisfactory reply.

Yet surely the answer is plain enough. What does it matter whether for a few short years I am, in the world's eyes, your superior or your inferior, if both of us are striving to carry out the duties of our station in a proper spirit? A good servant is a far better man than a bad master, and a good master is equally a better man than a bad servant. It is not a question of position at all, and the true Christian, the man who elects to serve God, is not in the least concerned to know whether the world approves of his merit or not. The approval that matters to him comes from elsewhere.

All men ought to be equal in the eyes of the world, shrieks the Socialist; and that is just where Socialism confesses its own incapacity for combatting the evils of life. For the Socialist would begin at the wrong end in his endeavour to set everything right. The dignity of service —and in that word I include all service, whether rendered by a king to his people, by a footman to his master, or by a workman to his employer —can never be enhanced in the smallest degree by what the world chooses to think of it. The good servant, in whatever capacity he serves, will not become better because the world esti-

mates him more highly. Indeed, he would be more likely to degenerate, for the world's applause is apt to have a debilitating rather than a bracing effect.

There can be nothing ignoble, then, about service, provided the motive is good, for it is an essential part of our subjection to the law of the Master of us all. Just as the soldier in obeying his officer, obeys his king, the Christian in serving those legitimately placed above him, obeys his God. So true is this, that we can almost surely deduce from a servant's honesty, loyalty, and devotedness in the service of his temporary master, the measure of his honesty, loyalty, and devotedness in the service of the common Lord and Master of us all.

It is only where the teaching of Christ has lost its hold upon the heart, and where the spirit of the age has crept in, usurping its place, that we find an insubordination which is the result of the Socialistic tendencies of the times in which our lives are cast.

No doubt there will be plenty to attack me for using that word "insubordination." It smacks too much, I shall be told, of the feudal system, ecclesiasticism, and Heaven knows how many other dreadful things. I care little for that. What I do care for very much is to rouse my countrymen to a sense of the real value of things, to get them to see life in just proportion, to serve God, in other words, rather than Mammon. The

using of one's talents to their full is one matter, as I have elsewhere pointed out, the insubordinate spirit of revolt against service of any sort is quite another. It is the old choice between God and the world—a choice which admits of no bargaining—no compromise.

Let us at least be frank with ourselves. If Christ's way, at times, seems hard, if the world's standard of honour, morality, and conduct seems infinitely easier for us to go by, and we come to the conclusion that this standard is "good enough" for us, let us not try to palter with our consciences and persuade ourselves that it will be also good enough for God. We know in our hearts that the matter does not stand thus. We know that we have recognised the better things; and that if we choose the worse, we are taking service with the world and against God. And if we will but acknowledge the fact freely, and abandon all the miserable subterfuges of compromise, we shall not find ourselves so utterly at a loss where to turn for help, when the prizes of the world are proved to be worthless baubles, and the pleasures of the earth have turned to dust and ashes in our mouths.

The guardsman, the trooper, the gunner, now in the thick of it, remind us, through their letters sent from the shell-torn trenches, that in the mercy of God and in fervent prayer to Him is their inspiration, their hope, their trust. Listen to this extract from a letter now before me: "Facing

death quietly night and day is a good reminder there is another life beyond the grave. To see a brave friend lying dead beside you is good for the soul." And this: "Nothing bucks a fellow up so much under a hell of fire as feeling you're all right with God. As you used to say in your sermons: Isn't He just splendid?"

XVIII

IS ENGLAND CHRISTIAN?

I.—The Mind of England

No one, I hope, will quarrel with me for drawing a distinction between the bad Christian and the nominal Christian; between, that is to say, the man who, though he may live recklessly and immorally, acknowledges and retains a genuine belief in the fundamental truths of Christianity, and the man for whom Christianity simply does not count in any thought or action of his life. The distinction is a vital one, for while the bad Christian will be conscious of his ill-doing, and will probably make spasmodic efforts to reform himself, the man who has utterly cast aside his faith will not admit the need for repentance. His conscience, in fact, will have ceased to reprove him, and that is a very terrible state to be in.

In discussing, then, the question how far England can rightly be called a Christian country, it is useless to search out the statistics of Sunday church-going, or to look up criminal records, or to examine the increase or decrease in the consumption of alcohol. Such things are well enough in their place, but they do not tell us anything

concerning the religious feeling of a country. The worst drunkard in the kingdom may be a real Christian, fighting against a vice which is constantly overcoming all his efforts, just as, alas, the most habitual church-goer may have half a dozen reasons for his constant attendance, even though he lacks all belief in the spiritual efficacy of religion.

The matter is one of atmosphere—I had almost said of intuition—and we can only arrive at a satisfactory estimate of the Christianity of any country by asking ourselves further: "Is the mind of that country Christian? Is her heart, her will, her character, and her religion Christian?"

And where are we to find evidence of the mind of England? Where else but in the output of her mind—in the library, upon the platform, in the press and on the stage.

Take, then, in the first place, the thousands of volumes that are published in this country every year, and inquire of the free libraries, the lending libraries, the booksellers and the publishers as to what books have the largest circulation. They will tell you that the books which make the greatest sensation and are the most widely read are not good books, but bad books, bad as regards questions of religion, or of morals, or of both.

The books that are read to-day by the man in his club, by the woman in her boudoir, by

the girl behind the counter, and the young man in the street, are the books that cannot feed the Christian mind. In our cities there is an ever-increasing population drinking at the Stygian pools of filth, feeding upon the offal of literature, and learning lessons of degradation and shame.

It will be retorted upon me that I know nothing about it, but I do know. I have taken these books up; I have seen them in the garret in the East End, I have seen them in the boudoir of the rich, I have seen them in the clubroom, and cast about like garbage in hotels.

Why is literature like this? Because the people will have it so. Let a man write a clean, wholesome, and instructive book, and he will have to go round with it in his hand, begging his friends to buy it. The amount of balderdash, of lying hysteria, that is sent broadcast over the country, and eagerly devoured by the public, is almost incredible. Not many weeks ago, before the war broke out, I asked a literary friend of mine, who was in the habit of writing stories for publishers, why he did not make some serious contribution to the literary market. He replied: "Whenever I venture to send a story or article calculated to do some good, it is invariably returned with some such comment as 'too stodgy,' or 'the public will not have it,' or 'we do not publish sermons.'"

Still worse, there are novels which command

an immense sale, whose whole tone, though not frankly indecent, tend to the propagation of such irreligion and immorality as no sane Christian would tolerate for a moment. There is no direct attack on Christianity in such books, but, what is infinitely more dangerous, its doctrines and teaching are tacitly assumed to be obsolete and the actions of the characters are guided entirely by the light of their own reason—or rather of their own inclinations. The author apparently takes it for granted that the reader will approve, not necessarily his characters' lives, but at least the freedom from restraint with which they act. And to judge by the sales of these books, such approval is easy to obtain. But assuredly, if literature in England to-day is non-Christian, it is because the minds of its readers are non-Christian, because the mind of England is not Christian.

Again, what of the Press? The Press that has its hand upon the public pulse, the Press that judges to a nicety what its patients require, what its patients dislike, what its patients devour gluttonously. You may take up any ordinary daily paper and read it through, and you might come to the conclusion that there was no personal God at all, only the fetish of the hour.

Not that the Press denies the existence of God. That is not its province, but it expounds everything without the mention of His Name. It will tell you it is a daily record of daily

events, that it is interested only in recording them, and that it knows no other section of the public to whom it can offer a circulation.

The Press will record a Parliamentary debate on a religious question which has got, somehow or other, inextricably tangled up with politics, and it will give a leader possibly on that subject, with an occasional column of colourless "Church Notes." But the Press knows nothing of the Kingdom of God, it ignores the claims of Jesus Christ, it has nothing to say concerning the interests of the immortal soul.

How heavily handicapped a high principled journal is, how difficult for it to compete in this race for readers with those papers which are merely a record of facts which never happened, to please a public which never thinks!

Yet, if the Press is non-Christian, it is not altogether the Press that we must blame. It is non-Christian because its readers are non-Christian, because the mind of England is not Christian.

Once more, let us take the Stage. No matter what may be said for the drama, no one will pretend that it is a means of drawing people to think more of God and the eternal interests of their own souls. All plays are not bad, even if the best that can be said of them is that they serve to amuse or pass pleasantly a couple of hours. But I fear it cannot be denied that, for the most part, the play that attracts is the immoral play; the entertainment that draws is

the one that appeals to the senses; the theatre or music-hall that makes most money is the one that caters most openly to the frankly pagan instincts of the crowd.

At its best one can hardly maintain that the theatre feeds the soul. At its worst, it rouses the passions, stirs the senses, and banishes all thought of religion from the minds of its devotees. A so-called problem play, or a sensuous musical comedy, is not exactly designed to stimulate the spiritual life of the Christian. It cannot do him any good; it may do him irreparable harm.

What, then, is the mind of England? Judged by its literature, its Press, and its drama, I say it is not Christian.

It may be objected to me that, after all, even in these aspects England is not only no worse than other countries, but is not so bad as many. Is it really any satisfaction to a man to feel that, though an evil liver, he is not quite so abandoned as his next-door neighbour? Let us not trouble ourselves about the iniquities of other countries. Let us come to our own horrors, our own iniquities, and not for ever be gathering in great crowds to protest against this or that evil abroad. The Englishman loves to point out his neighbour's wrong-doing—a characteristic which has, perhaps not unjustly, earned for him that reputation for hypocrisy and cant with which all other nations credit him. Cannot

we for once in a way play the game and attack ourselves, and be men even if we are seemingly no longer Christians in the dogmatic sense of the word? Let us shut our eyes to the motes in the eyes of others and open them to the beams in our own.

II.—The Heart of England

Though the mind of England be not Christian, is it not possible that her heart is, after all, in the right place? Much was forgiven to the woman who loved much, and charity, as we know, covers a multitude of sins. I have pointed out that the habitual drunkard may recognise and abhor his vice, even though his struggles against it seem doomed to end in failure. But if he uses his Christian armoury aright, we can trust him safely to Providence.

Now, how does our country, as a whole, stand in this respect? Does she, as a frail Christian, loathe the vices she is too weak to conquer? Does she, as a believing Christian, look for strength and forgiveness to a Higher Power? Does she still strive, in spite of many failures and repeated transgressions, and in however feeble a fashion, to obey that Divine ordinance of Christ: "If you love Me, keep My commandments"? Does she, in fine, display that hatred of sin which is the measure of the love we bear to our Creator?

This is a test which, if truly applied, should

prove an infallible one. However vicious or criminal a man may be, his future is not to be despaired of if he recognises his position. A number of powerful motives may impel him to commit his evil actions, but so long as he knows that they are evil, there is hope for him.

Is this the case to-day with England? Let us examine the matter from this standpoint, and we shall be able to ascertain how far she is Christian by the measure in which she shows her hatred of sin, her real antipathy to vice and iniquity.

And when we inquire into the matter, what are we told? That there is no such thing as sin. That it is a relic of a bygone superstition; that it is a thing dealt with by popish priests for the sake of having a confessional and hearing the scruples of silly people. Sin, we are told, is merely a growing pain—a necessary part of nature's system of evolution through which the human race is progressing.

How can the God of Heaven object to a man enjoying himself? "If there is a God," as someone said to me the other day, "He wants me to be happy, and the only way to be happy is for me to think, to say, to do as I please."

That may be some people's idea of happiness, though even the pagans of old taught a nobler system of morals. And, after all, if there is such happiness in sin, in doing what

one pleases, in such unfettered freedom of thought and action, how is it that they who have the best opportunity for gratifying every whim are the most miserable, the most discontented, the most blasé people to be found on this earth? These are the dullest dogs of us all, for they can only think and talk about one thing. They should be tied to a chain and driven into their kennels.

England's estimate of sin is all wrong; at one end of the scale it is based on sentimentalism run wild, at the other it is founded on philosophy gone mad. So lightly does England regard sin to-day that she has ceased to see any virtue in religion. Hell has been dismissed with costs, and we are taught that if there is a heaven at all, it is to be on earth, and that Socialism has discovered it and intends to open its gates to all the people. That is what has become very much in vogue, if not in such direct terms, anyhow in thought and act to-day in this once honest and Christian country.

I read, not so very long ago, two reviews of two new plays, in one of which the heroine professes that she has been sinned against, and proclaims her own intentions in some such words as these: "I intend," she says, "to sin against others. I was dragged down into the streets, and I intend to drag others down. A man ruined my life and covered me with the mire of the gutter, and I have set myself to entangle

other men, and I glory in the fact that I have ruined others."

What sort of pagan philosophy is that? Is that the object lesson that should be taught to the man in the street? Is that the sort of mental pabulum on which our countrymen and countrywomen are to grow strong? The curtain ought to have been rung down, not at the end, but at the opening scene of that play.

In the review of the second play I came upon a hero, and the dilemma of the plot was this: He has ruined another man's wife, and from the window of her room he sees a fellow-man done to death. Now he is tortured with scruples, and he wonders whether he ought to go forth and proclaim the innocence of one who might be charged with the crime.

Now, what troubles me most in this scheme of things is that, whereas our immoral hero has no scruples at all about the soul murder he has committed, he is greatly concerned about a body murder committed by another man. What kind of morality, I would ask, is this, to put before other people? Here is a man entirely undisturbed about the great wrong he himself had wrought, but worried and anxious about an affair with which he had nothing to do.

I believe that our moral sense, in this country, is getting hopelessly blurred by being accustomed to see things in such false perspective. Indeed, it would not surprise me if I heard

of a man feeling no remorse at all for robbing a girl of her virtue, and yet being filled with qualms of conscience for stealing a run at cricket. Could anything be more ridiculous, more ghastly? Our sense of right and wrong seems to be wholly lost or perverted, and to shield a woman's honour appears to mean nowadays, not to protect her virtue, but to save her from the ignominy of being found out.

I could fill pages with similar instances of wrong thinking, culled not only from our drama, but from our literature, our periodical reviews, our daily and weekly press. There is not a single commandment the breaking of which is not viewed with approval in one form or another. There are no deadly sins left, and the rising generation is applauded for refusing to be bound by any old-fashioned rules which hamper or limit in any way the following of its own appetites and inclinations. All sense of obligation, all idea of honour seem fast disappearing from this land, which once prided itself on its steadfast devotion to duty. Heaven forbid that I should be too sweeping in my condemnation of my fellow countrymen. I know, and I recognise with gratitude and joy, that there are many who still hold to the ancient ideals of our fathers. But these new and insidious teachings are gaining ground with dreadful rapidity; they are eating into the very vitals of the nation, and what body can remain sound and clean when corruption

and decay have already made havoc of its members?

There is still time for England to regain that hold on Christianity which she seems to be fast relinquishing. But the evil is very real, the danger very pressing. Action and reaction, science tells us, are always equal and opposite, and we may extract some comfort from the thought that when the pendulum has swung a certain distance in one direction, it will swing back again to its old position. For all that, no sane citizen, no Christian man can view the past decade without misgiving. If England's heart be not Christian, if England's aspirations be not Christian, to what inevitable abyss of immorality and anarchy may she not be drifting? "Where thy treasure is," says the divine Master, "there is thy heart also." Where is England's treasure?

III.—The Will of England

It is not my intention to enter into any abstruse arguments concerning Free-will and Predestination. Over-clever people may split hairs on this matter, may "argue high and low and also argue round about it," but in the last resort a man's own common-sense will tell him that his will, that imperial power in the palace of his soul, is free. He may so weaken it by habitual and often-repeated surrender as to make it too feeble to assert its force, but those very acts themselves

have been done of his own free choice. Like every other of man's powers, physical, mental or spiritual, the will requires to be constantly exercised if it is to be kept in a healthy and vigorous condition.

You can imprison a man, you can break his body, but no power on earth can break his will. You can acquire an enormous influence over another man, you can mislead him, you can tempt him into the commission of all sorts of crimes and evil acts, but, however poor-spirited he may be, you cannot drive or lead him farther than he is willing to go. "It is of ourselves that we are thus or thus."

It is a man's own choice whether he follow good or evil, right or wrong, Life eternal or Death eternal. There is nothing in this world, or the next, that we cannot have if we are willing to pay the price demanded. The price demanded—that is the point! For this freedom of will, this liberty of choice, bears with it a terrible responsibility. The man who says "I am free to do as I like," speaks truly in the sense that no one, not even God Himself, can force him against his will to choose good rather than evil, Heaven rather than Hell. But if mentally he is free, morally he is not so. And if he does not recognise this truth, he cannot call himself a Christian.

No man in this country can legally sell himself into slavery, and in the same way no

man has the moral right to barter away his freedom of will. For that is what he does when he yields himself wholly to the business and pleasures of this world. Who but himself forges chains for the drunkard, the voluptuary, the gambler? A man may gain the whole world if he sets his mind to it, and the world in return will place fetters upon him from which he can never get free. Slavery, absolute and hopeless, is the price that man has to pay who sets his heart upon merely material things.

Those who flout what they call "convention," who boast that they have freed their minds from the "chains of superstition," the "fetters of religion," find themselves in no long time condemned to a real imprisonment, a real slavery in the world.

Is the man whose whole thoughts and desires are bound up with material things any better than a slave? He is ever at the world's beck and call, he has no hour he can call his own, he has to waste, at the will of others, those brief fleeting moments which will never recur, and he has to squander in idleness and frivolity those precious talents which were given to him, not for the world's service, but for his own spiritual advancement. Can such a man be called free? He may shout till he is hoarse "Britons never will be slaves," but he himself is the denial of the boast.

Too much intercourse with the world is not

good for a man. Even the old Pagan philosopher who tells us that "he never left the society of his fellow-men without feeling less a man," knew this. For the man who would remain free, free in mind, free in soul, free in spirit, must make an effort to retain that freedom. He must find time for meditation, for self-communion, for contemplation of things other than the world recks of, nor must his wordly affairs be so engrossing as to prevent him withdrawing himself at intervals to seek that spiritual refreshment for his soul, his real self, which the world cannot give. Such a man may truly call himself a Christian, for he is free —free in this world and the next.

How stands it, I would ask, with England in this respect to-day? Is England's will free—is England's will Christian?

Can anyone look on the disturbing spectacle of our crowded towns and our neglected countryside and answer that question in any other way than with an emphatic negative? A hundred years ago there were 80 per cent. of the population in rural districts; fifty years ago the population was divided equally between town and country; to-day more than 80 per cent. of our people live in our mammoth cities, seeking amusement and excitement to drown their cares, to forget their work, to forget their duties.

Even the politicians, whose chief care is

votes, and who have nothing to say concerning the souls of the voters, are beginning to realise the danger. "Back to the land" is the vain cry, and endless schemes of land reform are mooted in the impossible endeavour to get the people away from the overcrowded towns, back to the peaceful and harmless life of the country.

But I grieve to say that you will never persuade the people of England to go back to the land until they are assured that amusement, excitement, and feverish pleasures of every sort are to be had within easy reach of every farm. You can no more drag them out of the music-hall than you can drag them into church.

Heaven forbid that, in speaking like this, I should be thought desirous of taking away from the worker his legitimate recreation. No one can fail to observe that our working communities need, even more than others, some relaxation after their hard and strenuous day's work. No man who knows anything about the lives of those millions who have nothing to do all day but pick at bits of machinery and perform soulless tasks, can fail to sympathise with their longing for a laugh in which to forget themselves. For God's sake let them laugh. For God's sake let them forget themselves; but let us not, in the effort to lighten their lives, pander to the lewd and lower side of their nature. Surely it is possible to rouse a laugh by honest and clever

humour as easily as by a vulgar song or a suggestive play.

Whose fault is it that our working men have abandoned the country and have crowded, and are continuing to crowd, into the towns? Our fault—England's fault! And having got them into these great towns, where there is no air to breathe, scarcely room to live, how have we—how has England—provided for their relaxation and amusement? We have trained them to take pleasure in what is low and vulgar; can we expect them to give up the excitement and the sense-delighting fare we have taught them to enjoy?

And so the vicious circle runs on. It is the will of England, bent only on material gain, that has created these conditions for her own sons. And now, aghast at the result of her own handiwork, England feebly raises the cry of "back to the land." So might a frightened hen run wildly up and down the banks of a pond, cackling to the ducklings she has hatched to return to the soil on which they were born.

If the rich were setting an example of clean living and rational enjoyment to the poorer classes, the position would not be so desperate. But notoriously such is not the case. Never in the history of this country has there been a time when the upper classes have so profligately wasted their energies in the pursuit of pleasure. The gathering of money, and the spending of

it in a thousand reckless ways, seems to be the one object on which the mighty Will of England is concentrated.

All thought of duty, of discipline, of devotion has been cast aside before the overpowering desire to plunge into this maelstrom of pleasure, to satiate the senses, and then devise new means of gratifying them. The grossest materialism has had this unhappy country by the throat, and confident though we may be in the ultimate triumph of good, can any Christian contemplate the spectacle of such abasement without a sickening sense of failure and defeat?

Is it not time for England to bestir herself, to use that freedom of will with which, in common with all mankind, she has been endowed, and to shake off the shackles of the monstrous slavery in which she has been lying? This present long-drawn war is giving us time to turn round and review our past lives. May the picture presented draw from England the determined cry, "Never again!"

IV.—The Character of England

From these three qualities which exist in man, his mind, his heart, and his will, there comes a resultant force called character. That power which is the sum of man's excellences or deficiencies, that figure, that engraving upon the individual, that personality which makes him

distinct from everything and everyone else. "Engraving" was what the Greeks called it, and whose image and superscription is engraved, we may ask, upon the soul of England to-day? Is it Cæsar's, or is it God's?

It is for each of us to determine how we shall engrave our personality. Shall it be with Christ crucified, Whose followers we profess ourselves to be, or with the figure of Cæsar, pleasure and the world? It is not only mind, heart and will that determine character. Such things as heredity and environment must also be taken into account. And it is for this reason that in trying to form our own character we must remember our collective as well as our individual responsibility. A man's character affects not only himself, but his neighbours, and his descendants as well.

If we reflect upon this for a little, and consider the amount of good or evil that arises from environment, can we refuse to acknowledge that there is a great and pressing need for helping those who live in the most squalid and evil surroundings, and that we, each of us, have a very real responsibility in connection with them? The character of England is the character of her people, and if so many of them are at this moment sweltering in the slums, and being brought up in the most squalid circumstances, how can we expect their character to be Christian?

We see daily more and more how inefficient

is our Poor Law system, how inadequate our methods of treating those who are in need of help, whose souls and bodies are stunted for lack both of material and spiritual food; and if we have a spark of manhood in us, we realise that some real effort is necessary if the life and blood of the country is to be put in the way of proper development. But it is not sufficient to realise this. Action is necessary. But how many of us take anything more than an occasional interest in such things?

Plenty of plausible excuses, no doubt, will be forthcoming from the individual for his own apathy in the matter. I shall be told—as I have been told—that it is all very regrettable and deplorable, but after all, it is Parliament's business to look after the welfare of the country, and that if Parliament neglects its duty, it is difficult to see what is to be done, except in the way of spasmodic and possibly ill-directed charity.

Well, I am no politician, but I think my friends are right who say that this a matter for Parliament's attention. But if it be true that Parliament neglects this grave duty, does that relieve us, as individuals, of our own responsibility? Is not Parliament the representative of the people? Is not Parliament the expression of the people's will—of England's will? If England had sufficient force of character to insist that the politicians should stop mouthing futilities, and should take up this question at once, could

any Parliament resist the unanimous demand? No, blame Parliament if you will, but the country remains responsible.

Other excuses have been made to me. "After all," I have been told, "you must not be impatient. We are doing our best. For instance, we are making vast strides in education——"

Education! Ah, yes, an important matter, this education. And how are we educating our boys and girls to-day? Not the poor only, but the rich, for the education of both is of equal urgency.

If we inquire into this question we shall find that instead of correcting the evils of environment by trying to develop, to draw out the best that is in our poorer children, and to eradicate the harm that miserable surroundings have already done their immature minds, we hustle them through one standard after another as quickly as possible, and turn them adrift to fight the battle of life at the very moment when they are least fitted to cope with the world, when their minds are dazed and bewildered with a few bits of knowledge crammed pell-mell into their childish brains, so that they are just fit to enjoy the dubious delights of the moving pictures or the penny dreadful.

Of the spiritual training of these children, perhaps the less said the better. There is now a great outcry against religious teaching of any kind in the County Council schools.

So that I suppose we shall soon arrive at a time when religion will be altogether divorced from education, and so long as a university scholarship is occasionally won by a County Council schoolboy, we shall be satisfied that we have done our duty by him in every respect.

But is the rich man's son much better provided for? We hear a great deal nowadays about the necessity for reform in our big Public Schools. But what is the chief complaint alleged against them? It is not, as might be supposed, that they pay too little attention to the Christian education of the boys, that the religious teaching is perfunctory or neglected, that the morals of the school are not so carefully looked after as they should be.

No, the charge is that they are not "commercial" enough, that they do not teach a boy the things that will enable him to get on in the world, that they do not turn out a sufficient supply of sharp business men. Well, no doubt it is an excellent thing to be a good business man, but there are other things even more important, and one of them is to be a good Christian.

But England is apparently inclined just now to set a higher value on the good business man than on the good Christian, and that is a significant indication of her own character. She has recognised that environment counts for much in the formation of character, in the production

of good citizens, in the moulding of her children; yet such efforts as she puts forth to control that environment are all in the wrong direction.

It is a sign, I say, of England's character that Christianity plays so small a part in her schemes for social reform, her political plans for cajoling this or that section of voters. Problems are daily arising which, if considered from the Christian standpoint, would cease to be problems at all. Yet they are discussed, and different solutions debated, as hotly as though they had not been settled once for all two thousand years ago.

I suppose I shall be excused of extravagance if I affirm that the environment of the rich in this country is as bad, morally, as that of the poor. Yet anyone who takes the trouble to examine the condition of things will, I think, agree with that statement. The progress of mechanical invention alone has been such, during the last fifty, and particularly the last twenty, years as to make the surroundings of the wealthy intolerably luxurious. They have been so pampered, so petted, so glutted with comforts, that it has required nothing less than a world-shaking war to rouse them from sinking into a bottomless sea of apathy and indolence.

There are others, again, whose wealth, they flatter themselves, lies in their intellect. They scorn the materialism of the age, as much as

they scorn the essential truths of Christianity. Such men create an atmosphere of religious doubt and disbelief that is even more poisonous than that spread about by the free-thinker. For the lies they teach are half-truths. They take a Christian doctrine, a Christian dogma, and proclaim that it is by no means wholly superstitious. It contains, in fact, quite a respectable degree of truth if it be interpreted in the right way, which, needless to add, is their way. How many are there to-day in this country whose minds and souls have been led astray by the specious misrepresentations of Christian Science, Theosophy, and kindred "religions"?

I look around me and see the mad scramble for money and pleasure among all classes in this England of ours. I listen, and I hear only a confused babel of voices, each proclaiming it has a new truth to give to the world. Yet England is still reckoned among the Christian countries of the world. When shall we pause to set our house in order? Before England can rightly call herself Christian again, she will need a good spring-cleaning of the most thorough and drastic description. The war is doing much for us; it is building character. Most of the brave wounded men with whom I have come into contact say: "Well, after my experience under fire, life can never be quite what it was before." Or else they will tell you: "When you are in action you feel nothing but a worm, utterly and

absolutely dependent on God, ashamed of your past and strongly resolved, if you come out of it all right, to make amends in the future." The actual horrors of war will, with God's providence, be seen by a comparatively small number of our people. But is it too much to hope that the lessons will not be lost on each one of us?

XIX

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

SETTING aside the abuse which the party newspapers deal out so lavishly to their political opponents, I take it that there is no reason why a good party man should not be a good Christian. There is nothing, that is to say, or rather there ought to be nothing, inherently antagonistic between politics and Christianity. Indeed that is a mild way of putting it. For the two ought, in any Christian country, to be run in double harness.

This being so, it is, I fancy, because Socialism is, or would like to be, a political force that many worthy people are unable to understand why an ardent Socialist should not also be a good Christian. Such people will deprecate any attack on Socialism from the religious point of view. Socialism, they will urge, has not necessarily any connection with religion. It deals solely with certain reforms in the economic and social life of the community, and it is unjust to the poor Socialist to brand him as an anti-religious revolutionary, when he is in reality only doing his best to promote, according to his lights, the welfare of the poorer classes.

So strongly is this view held among a certain section of entirely worthy people, that there has actually come into existence a hybrid monstrosity which calls itself Christian Socialism. And this aspect of the movement renders it very difficult to deal faithfully with the real article. For these self-styled Socialists, actuated themselves by what no doubt are noble philanthropic motives, reject with scorn and derision any adverse criticism of the theory and practice of Socialism. They declare, in language about the meaning of which there can be no mistake, that Socialism, if not a religious movement, is at any rate akin to religion; that it is a system of philosophy which is the outcome of the religious spirit, and that anyone who calls these statements into question must be denounced as narrow-minded, bigoted, and untruthful.

If such individual Socialists, who assure us that their religion is in no way tainted by their Socialism, were the recognised leaders and propagandists of the international movement, there might possibly be some hope of salvation for Socialism, but, as a matter of fact, these well-intentioned gentlemen are at the head of no section of Socialism whatever. They ought rather to be called what we ourselves are—Social Reformers. If in any sense they do belong to the socialistic movement, they are its free lances. They do not count.

Before they can be allowed the right to speak

in the name of Socialism, they must enlist and serve under its flag, and prove their claim to speak authoritatively in its name. They must further, as Socialists, accept the whole of the socialist teaching and must not pick out bits of its creed, here and there, as suits them, and then fancy that they are in a position to assure others of the harmlessness of the whole of its doctrine. I have written and spoken a great deal on this particular subject, and if I have let isolated individuals severely alone, I have not omitted to cite recognised authorities in support of my contention that Socialism, as an international movement and in its broad aspect, is not merely non-religious, but anti-religious.

I have been called slipshod, bigoted, shallow, and narrow-minded, but abuse cannot alter facts, such facts as may be ascertained not only from the classic, as well as the street literature put forth and published in the name of Socialism, but also from the men of flesh and blood who form the rank and file of this advancing army. Abroad, as at home, I have made it my business, whenever occasion offered, to get into conversation with Socialists among the labouring classes. In this way I have had quite exceptional chances of satisfying myself about the effects of Socialism upon the religious character and practice of its most ardent votaries.

The impression left upon my mind, in practically every instance I have come across, has

been anything but favourable to Socialism as a going religious concern. I could cite innumerable examples, proving up to the hilt that the thorough-going Socialist finds no place in his life for religion. Oftener than not he will tell you that, after becoming a Socialist, he has dropped religion altogether. I wish I could think and say otherwise. In this sad business I should love to discover that I was mistaken. But in no part of the country, in no diocese, and in no parish of it, have I yet been told by priest or parson or people that my verdict upon Socialism in its relation to religion is contradicted by experience. In order rightly to understand the real attitude of Socialism towards religion we must, however, examine it not merely in theory, but more especially in practice; in a word, we must take it in the concrete as a great international system with its public principles, its avowed aims, its recognised leaders and apostles, its vast propagandist organisation, its mob orators, its foul literature. I print below two letters which were published some time ago in one of our provincial newspapers and which were sent to me at the time for reply.

"Sir,—I am enjoying the correspondence on the above subject in your columns. I am afraid that some of my comrades would mislead your readers by insinuating that there is something in common between Socialism and

Christianity. There must be no flirting with Christianity under the guise of Christian Socialism, for no man or woman can be a Christian and a Socialist at the same time. Because Socialism stands for universal wealth, Christ for universal poverty; Socialism stands for this world, Christ for the next world; Socialism stands for courage, Christ for humility and meekness; Socialism stands for the human race, Christ for God's chosen people; Socialism stands for equal justice, Christ for intolerance and bigotry; Socialism stands for human reason, Christ for faith in God; Socialism stands for human knowledge, Christ for revelation from God. On all these important points Christ's teachings are in distinct antagonism to Socialism.

"Yours, etc.

"_____"

This is candid at any rate, and expresses the Socialist's point of view to perfection. But the following is even stronger:

"Sir,—You deserve the hearty thanks of all Socialists for the courageous way in which you are allowing a discussion on the differences we have with Christians. Without apologising, I will give your readers some reasons why we, as Socialists, reject Christianity. We reject Christianity because it is the evangel of self-abnegation instead of self-realisation, self-obliteration instead of self-

assertion, also because it glorifies altruism, duty, humility, submission, contentment, and the other slave virtues. We believe Christianity to be the cause of the decadence of the common people, and for the existence of this respectable barbarism erroneously described as 'civilisation.' Civilisation is not worth having where the wants of the individual are not satisfied. For what is civilisation if it brings not happiness? For this we reject Christianity.

"We reject Christianity because we think it is responsible for this pseudo-civilisation, with its corroding charity, its cant, hypocrisy, wage slavery, the sybaritic splendour of the parasites, and the squalid misery of the producer. We believe Christianity to be a curse and incubus on the minds of the mutable many. For this we reject it.

"We repudiate Christianity and all other theorems that quail under the stern, staunch, steadfast gaze of reason and scientific analysis. We reject it because its devotees have ever been the enemies of progress and the proletariat; because it is founded on fiction, not fact—blindfold belief, not judgment, knowledge, or reason.

"We reject it because it demoralises the minds of the demi-damned, the workers, chloroforms the conceptions of womankind, and confuses and confounds the brains of the young.

Christianity is the gospel for rainbow-chasers, snobocrats, sucklings, slaves, and sycophants.

"Yours, etc.

"_____"

I can fancy the dear good Christian Socialist's distress at reading such letters as these. How he would wring his hands and protest very bitterly against the writers!

"Indeed, my dear Father," I can hear him saying, "these people you quote are quite mistaken; they haven't grasped what Christianity is or what Socialism is; they are utterly wrong-headed. You must surely admit that."

I do. But I also recognise that we must take Socialism and judge of it by its effects upon such writers as the two correspondents quoted above, who, moreover, are representative of scores of thousands among our toiling fellow-countrymen. And I would say something further. The Socialist of this stamp may be mistaken, wrong-headed—what you will—but he is a solid fact—not a shadow to be dissipated by the light of any watered-down theory of Socialism. And if the Christian Socialist complacently dismisses such men as "extremists," may I remind him that in revolutionary times it is the extremist who is very apt to get his own way in the long run. He rises to power on the shoulders of moderate men, who, too late, find what a monster they have brought

to life, and all their own timid and temperate counsels are swept away like chaff before the wind.

Does not all history confirm that lesson? And I solemnly warn these Christian Socialists that they are lending their support to a movement, which, if it should ever prove successful, will assuredly claim them as its first victims. They are incurring the responsibility of directly aiding to establish a system of society whose inevitable result would be the destruction of that Christianity which they profess to hold so dear.

For my part, I can appreciate the Socialist, and, much as I abhor his views, I can at least understand the frank expression of them. But the Christian Socialist I can neither appreciate nor understand. To the Socialist we are under a debt of gratitude for forcing us to pause and study the social wrongs of the comrade class, and also for setting us a noble example as how to work whole-heartedly for a cause in which its advocate believes. It is not in social revolution but in social reformation that we must put our trust.

XX

WHO WANTS RELIGION?

I.—Topsy-Turvyism

I have often been puzzled to know why those very wonderful young men who are so constantly starting new movements in literature and art under some such vague terminology as Futurism, Cubism, Vertiginism and so on, should find it necessary not merely to ignore religion—that would perhaps be intelligible—but actually to insist on irreligion as being essential to the right practising of their novel principles. Why should a revolution in art forms necessarily imply an abandonment of our religious ideas? Such revolutions, not quite so hare-brained, perhaps, but far-reaching enough, have occurred many times in the past, but I cannot recall any previous school of art attacking religion as such, or making the abandonment of religion a *sine qua non* of its own existence.

Various solutions of this puzzle might be hazarded. An easy way out would be to write these "pioneers" down as insane, and so not worth noticing. Or again, it may be said that since their intention is to make a clean sweep

of the past, religion must go into the dust-bin, with all the other musty "shibboleths" of the centuries. But then that is hardly logical, for religion is a very vital thing, and is essentially, for each one of us, a question of the moment and of the future.

On the whole, the conclusion I have come to on the matter strikes me as being the most reasonable, though perhaps the most saddening, of all. These wise and wonderful young men, I take it—and, indeed, we have it on their own authority—are out to make a noise in the world, to attract attention and to win a success, which they could not otherwise hope for, by making themselves as bizarre and grotesque as possible. But that in itself is not enough. Like all self-constituted leaders, they not only wish to make a splash, they also require followers. And they hope to gain sympathy for their incongruous and ignorant ideas on art and literature by pandering to the world's present impatience of any form of religious restraint.

By proclaiming that religion is to exist no more, they calculate, with a considerable amount of worldly cunning, that their aims will be viewed with interest and sympathy by that large number of people who want to find some excuse for doing without God.

Such people are alarmingly common in the world to-day. Some of them try to satisfy their

consciences by following after new and strange gods and philosophies, some are openly and sheerly indifferent to any other life but the one they live, and some are seeking desperately for "proofs" that God does not exist. But in the end it all comes to this: that a terribly large number of men and women want to do away with religion altogether, in order that they may live their own vicious lives and obey their own disordered instincts without having to bear even the silent reproach of the empty church in the next street.

The old Puritans, as we have often been reminded, were so saturated with their peculiar ideas on the subject of happiness and godliness that they suppressed with an unsparing hand even the most innocent forms of recreation. They could not bear to see their neighbours happy or amused, and no man was accounted virtuous unless he went about with a long face and a sombre garb, and took no pleasure, however harmless, in mundane things.

We are in a fair way, it seems to me, to become like the Puritans turned upside down. Men and women of the world not only are indifferent to religion, but they want it put out of their lives altogether. They would not be thought intolerant—that would be bad form—but they are doing all they can, in a negative sort of way, to shove religion aside, to think about it as little as possible, and to talk about

it even less. If, by a rare chance, the question of religion crops up in conversation, how often do you hear any intelligent discussion on it? Religion, to these people, means less than nothing, because, horrible as it sounds, they have no desire to be reminded that they have a Creator, a Master to Whom they owe a very real obedience. They want, in fact, to do without God.

More horrible still, they want the rest of the world to do without Him. While they see men still leading earnest Christian lives around them, while they see others still going to church on Sunday, they do not feel wholly comfortable or at ease. They want everybody to be in the same position as themselves, with no priests to worry them or interfere, however ineffectively, with the good time they are having. In short, they do not wish to be reminded that a day of reckoning is bound to come as surely as their own empty and frivolous lives must have an end.

In this, as in so many other things, they are worse off, spiritually, even than those Egyptians of old who in the midst of their wildest carousals caused a representation of Death to be carried through the banqueting hall to remind the careless revellers of the fate that inevitably awaited each and all of them. Hard things, I fear, would be said of the good taste of a modern host who treated his guests to

such an unwelcome reminder—unless indeed, so curious are the workings of a diseased mind, the thing should be treated as a novel form of entertainment for the jaded diners and hailed with acclamation as an infinitely clever and amusing interlude.

Well, these people certainly do not want religion, and they do not want other people to want it either. What are we to do with them? We cannot reason with them. We cannot speak to them of Christ, of their duty to God, of their duty to others. They scarcely understand what you mean by the divinity of Christ, they do not acknowledge the Almighty, and they have no thought of duty in any shape or form. They would stare at you uncomprehendingly if you were to talk to them of their immortal souls.

They have no thought and no care for the future, they want no draft upon Heaven, they are satisfied with the good things of this life, the luxury and pleasure of the moment, and they will not be bored by any talk on a subject which means nothing to them. Living in a tainted atmosphere, their whole being has become vitiated. They have accommodated themselves only too well to the surroundings which they have themselves helped to create, and their appetite for the passing things of time and sense grows with what it feeds upon. They will thank you, in short, not to disturb them at the troughs from which they swill.

Well, they have got to be roused from their miserable and animal existence sooner or later, and we can only pray that their awakening may come in this life and not in the next. But from the practical point of view there is one thing that all of us, who believe and know that man is something better than a beast, can do to counteract the unholy influence which the example of such lives has on others. The world is full of sheep which follow unthinkingly whither they see those in front leading. Well, is it not the duty of such of us who still hold by the truths of religion, who understand how inalienably we belong to God and how absolutely we depend upon Him, is it not our duty, I say, to counteract such evil examples by living up to our own principles more firmly and rigorously? The slackness of believers is a shocking thing in this present day. For how can we have the face to protest against the active wrong-doers with our tongues, if our own lives do not bear witness that our religious beliefs are something more than intellectual? If the world to-day insists that it does not want religion, that it is tired of the old bogies and the worn-out superstitions, and that it means to get along without God for the future, how are we to retort with any effect unless we can show that, by holding fast to that source of strength which is not of this world, we are veritably made better and loftier creatures than

those poor fools of whom I have been speaking? A man is judged by his fellow-men, not by his words but by his acts, not by his professions of goodness but by his manner of living. And in such an age as this, more than any other, we are called upon to try to do a little better than our best, to raise rather than lower our moral standard. We are accustoming ourselves, unhappily, to living more softly and luxuriously than our forefathers did. We are making concessions to the weaker side of our nature all along the line. And men and women do things to-day without a reproach which even fifty years ago would have stamped them as hardly fit associates for decent people.

I do not say that there is anything actually sinful in many modern fashions, such as the craze for dining out every evening at restaurants, and similar habits, in themselves apparently harmless. But the accumulated effect of many of these worldly pleasures is bad directly for ourselves and indirectly for others. We lose touch with spiritual things, we come more and more to accept the standard of morality set by the world, till in the end there is nothing to distinguish us from the crowd of flesh-ridden worldlings who avowedly care for nothing but the gratification of their lusts, and whose whole life is an implicit denial of the existence of God.

I am not urging my fellow-countrymen to go about talking religion or trying to get up

arguments and discussions on Atheism or Agnosticism or any other queer "ism" that may be in the air just now. I only ask them to live up to their religion, to show by their daily life and conduct that the divinity of Christ is something more than a mere phrase for them, and that they refuse to conform to the easy-going morality of a world that is doing its best to forget the truth once revealed to it.

> "Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,
> And give to God each moment as it flies;
> Lord, in my life let both united be,
> I live to pleasure if I live to Thee."

II.—Current Cant

There is a great deal of what I am very sorely tempted to call affected ignorance with regard to spiritual matters abroad in the world to-day. I am constantly meeting people who in their own estimation are very earnest inquirers after truth. They are as busy as bees in seeking to answer the old conundrum: "Whence came we and whither do we go?" They ransack libraries for old volumes of out-worn philosophies, they flock to hear the latest exponent of a brand-new theory of life, they wear out their brains in trying to discover the esoteric meaning of pagan myths, and in the end they are just as wise, if a trifle more confused, than when they started.

Is it not odd that about the only book which they are too clever to consult, the only volume which they leave undisturbed upon its shelf, is the record of the doings and sayings of Christ? Of all the religious teachers the world has ever known, Christ is the most definite and the One Who leaves us in least doubt as to our origin and destination. I can only surmise that He is too plain, too simple and straightforward to be accepted as a satisfying guide by these folk. They want something more complex, something a little more brain-worrying. They will not, in fact, "become as little children" and be content with a clear explanation of what they insist is a very abstruse puzzle. They have an intellect, it appears, and to be told in plain terms that they come from God and that they go to God, and that their work in this world is to fit them for so great and wonderful a destiny, is to insult that intellect. The fact is such people are not seeking the truth at all. It is not religion they want. They are playing with their minds, making a game of the universe, exercising their brains in a problem which for them is a purely metaphysical one and has no actual relation to the practical affairs of life.

And that is just the difference between real religion and this dilettante dabbling in all the grotesque speculations with which man has in the past amused himself. Philosophy is all very

well in its place, but philosophy can never usurp the functions of religion. The philosopher is a theorist, but the truly religious man is the most practical of all men. He has a very shrewd idea of what he is out for and he means to get it. And ought not that to be the attitude of everyone who calls himself a Christian? Yet in a nominally Christian country like our own, we find a shockingly large number of men who still profess to be doubtful of what their spiritual aim in life should be.

"I know whence I came and whither I go," said Our Lord. And any follower of His, ignorant though he may be of many things, must at least, one would think, realise that he is not ignorant of this important truth. How can we make any spiritual progress at all, indeed, unless we know where we stand in this regard? We should be like a ship that has lost its rudder, drifting helplessly hither and thither at the mercy of the waves, and that I fear is the position of but too many in the world to-day.

It is not only too common to hear nowadays the complaint, "Yes, but where do I come in? Who cares for me? If I were to slip out of creation who would miss me? I should be no more than the leaf off the tree, a grain of sand less from the great shore, a mere bubble, a drop of water sucked into the ocean again." That is true enough from the world's point of view. You and I will not be missed, when we

leave this earth. Nobody is missed because nobody is wanted, and there are plenty of others waiting to fill our places. But the result of this mental attitude is a sort of despairing feeling that we are of no use to the world and that the world is of no use to us. And that is why we are so constantly hearing of suicides for the most trivial of reasons. Men are trying to get something out of this world which God has not put into it, and when they fail, they get disheartened, or rebellious, and they say, "Better to end it all. Things can't be worse than they are here, no matter where I go."

That is want of religion, want of Christianity. A Christian possesses at least this one great certainty—that he came from God and that he will return to God. He can hold fast to that certainty, however things go with him. Such a faith has no place for despair, and if that faith had a little more prominence given to it in these days than is unhappily the case, what a far finer and altogether happier place to live in this world would be.

What does all the current cant that is indulged in concerning the shackles of religion, the fetters of superstition and the rest of it really amount to? The man who has got rid of his religion—or thinks he has—talks proudly of his liberty of thought, of his independence, of his freedom from the tyranny of a dogmatic priesthood. Never, he will tell you, has he felt

himself so much a man as since he has renounced the foolish teachings of his childhood. But what is it he has really attained? Instead of the spiritual liberty which was to be his destiny, he has set up as his ideal the licence allowed the beasts of the field, who live according to their nature. The man without religion boasts that he too will live "according to his nature." But he lies when he makes that boast. He does not live according to his true nature. For man is not merely an animal. He has a higher and a lower nature, and the kind of person who gives the go-by to religion is deliberately developing his lower nature and neglecting the higher and spiritual side.

Let us import a little common sense into this question. Even the most materially minded will acknowledge that a man who does not exercise his muscles will soon degenerate into a flabby mass of flesh unfit even to take his place among the animals. If anyone wants a useful body, he must take care of it. If he wants to be healthy, he must obey the rules of health. If he wants to possess a sound thinking-machine he must exercise his brain. And similarly, if he wants to grow in spirituality, to become, in other words, something more than a thinking animal, he must cultivate that part of him which is spiritual. "That is all very well," the man who is trying to do without religion will say, "but if I am to cultivate my

spiritual nature, I don't see why I shouldn't do it in my own way. For one thing, my way is a much more pleasant way than yours. I don't hamper myself with any uncomfortable restrictions. I give fair play to every side of me. I don't believe everything I am told, and I certainly don't intend to put my intellect into bonds to please any man."

Just so. Yet, to take what seems to me a very good analogy, what would be thought of a youth, just entering the Navy, whose first proceeding should be to object to the discipline and regulations of the service? He might make out a very fair case for refusing to do this or that particular duty which was demanded of him. He might object to salute his superior officer on the ground that to do so could not possibly make him any more efficient in the knowledge of how to handle a ship or a fleet in the face of the enemy. And, on purely theoretical grounds, he might be right. But one thing is certain—he would be of no use whatever to the Navy.

I sometimes think we are like a lot of naughty school children who think it a fine thing to break the rules of their school and who imagine that, by defying authority, they are showing their independence and proving their freedom. A good caning is generally the end of such little outbursts, and if in the world-school our follies and rebellion against our Teacher are left

unrebuked for a time, is not that merely because His patience is inexhaustible and He wishes us to turn to Him for help of our own free will?

The fact is that the spirit of the world is as pagan to-day as ever it was. In one way or another, however clearly disguised, the world is still trying to do without God, without religion, without spirituality. Our impatience of discipline, our impatience of self-restraint, our impatience of all authority are merely symptoms of our refusal to acknowledge God. We will have no master set over us, either here or hereafter. In our own conceit, we will be free, lords of the universe and monarchs of creation, and the only reason why men are trying more and more to get away from religion, from Christianity, is because they wish to escape the restraint which religion asks them, in the Name of their Creator, to place upon themselves and their senses.

III.—Spiritual Snacks

Touching this matter of religion, I should be sorry to give anyone the impression that I believe most people to be either irreligious or non-religious. On the contrary, I think the majority of mankind do, in some sort, realise the necessity of religion. The trouble is that they do not actually want it with their whole heart and soul, as they want, for instance, the good things of this world. They have always time to spare for the business that will bring

them money, or the pleasure that will help them to an exciting hour. But they cannot work up any enthusiasm over religion, and if in the rush and hurry of modern life something has to be put aside or go to the wall altogether, you will find that, in most cases, it is religion that suffers.

To such people their religion is so mixed up with Sunday that they have little time for it during the week. And the man who punctiliously observes his Sunday duties, while his neighbours are openly and flagrantly ignoring theirs, is apt to plume himself on being rather a fine fellow, spiritually, and would certainly feel extremely hurt and astonished if he were told that his soul is starving for want of the daily nourishment which he refuses it.

For religion ought to be the first consideration, not the last, in the lives of all of us. How can it be possible for men who pay lip-service to their Creator, who acknowledge the claims of Christ, to relegate God to a back seat in their souls, where they can pay Him a careless visit once a week, forgetting all about His existence during the interval?

People of this sort take their religion as a sort of *hors d'œuvre* to the more serious business of the week. They like it in the form of a few spiritual snacks thrown to them, so to speak, across the counter. There are people who regard it as a sort of disagreeable necessity, inextricably bound up with church-going, a kind of

medicine to be swallowed in homœopathic doses, so that they hardly know whether they have had it or not. And there are some people, again, who cannot say their prayers till they have got their morocco-bound prayer-books with them, and who can only pray in one church and in one seat. What life, what virility can there be in such mechanical religion as that? If we really wanted religion, if we were steeped in it and saturated with it, it would be to us as the very foundation of our life, its centre of gravity, its source of strength and health and beauty. If we had got hold of the true spirit of religion, we should not be content with a perfunctory once-a-week acknowledgment of its claims. It would inspire us daily, hourly, in every action of our lives.

I notice that the power of prayer is not so derided to-day as it was thirty years ago. When the leaders of materialism were at the height of their fame, they laid it down dogmatically that, while prayer might bring some sort of subjective consolation to the weak-minded, it could not effect anything of itself. Well, even science has shifted its position since those days, and the power of prayer as a real force, quite apart from its religious significance, is now coming to be recognised more and more. This recognition of the value of prayer masquerades, it is true, under many quaint forms, but it is something to have it recognised at all.

But here again one must be on one's guard against the delusion that to gabble a certain form of words, without thinking of their meaning or without any intention of praying, is prayer in the real sense of the term. Prayer is one of the greatest forces in the world, but it must be the genuine article. Substitutes and imitations are no good.

Those people, therefore, who fancy they are doing excellently from the religious point of view, because they go down on their knees every morning and evening and say their prayers, would be well advised to look into the matter a little more closely. And if they are honest with themselves, they may be surprised to find how much time they waste in prayer which is not prayer at all. The spending of long hours in prayer is not in itself any proof of piety. In such cases I want to see the fruit of prayer. Are such people less critical of their neighbours? Are they more generous in their views? Are they more conscientious about paying their bills? Are they living up to the spirit of religion?

If not, they may have spent a long time in church, but they have not been long at prayer. You have to translate prayer into self-conquest, self-reverence, self-determination, to be just and kind and generous to your neighbour. That is the kind of religion we want in the world. It is not the hours spent on your knees, not the

number of hymns sung, not the amount of Sunday clothes in your wardrobe that counts, but the amount of fine Christian example that you give, built on the lines laid down by Christ, studied at the foot of the Cross. The man who is true to his religion will not be found wanting in his duty towards his king and his country, or towards all those with whom he comes into contact in the daily course of his business.

I desire to see not only the non-religious and the irreligious and the indifferent turning again towards Christ, but I also wish to see those who are still outwardly steadfast showing more enthusiasm, more grit, in the practice of religion. Nowadays, men seem to be afraid of standing erect on their feet and stiffening their backs and fighting for all they are worth for what they believe to be true. And it is just because we are so back-boneless, so half-hearted in religion that we are getting so soft and flabby in all the affairs of our daily life. How many men, I wonder, are there in this country who will let their religion interfere with their business! Why, the wise men of the world have even invented a special code of morals to be applied to business transactions, so that a man who looks upon himself as the soul of honour outside his office, will not hesitate to stoop to incredibly mean and sordid trickery where a business deal is concerned. Oh, the pity of it!

That is where religion comes in, and that is where you will find the difference between the man who is genuinely religious and the man for whom religion means little more than a Sunday church-parade. It all comes back to the old question of doing one's duty, whether to God or to one's neighbour or to oneself. The man who acts up to the spirit of religion, who follows Christ in his heart as well as in outward seeming, is the sort of man who can be trusted inside his office as well as outside of it.

That is the sort of man we want in England and in the Empire to-day—the man who puts religion first and allows no comfortable conventions to interfere with what his conscience tells him is the right thing to do. But where are we to find such men? One does not wish to exaggerate, but the humiliating truth is that most men are so little proud of their religion that they take every opportunity of putting it on one side or of endeavouring to lock it up in a water-tight compartment all to itself.

We are constantly being adjured as a nation to "wake up." In all directions, we are told, England is being overtaken and outstripped by her competitors, that we are growing careless and lazy, and that we are fast becoming the laughing-stock of the world for our slackness and inefficiency. That there is a certain measure of truth in these allegations I will not take

it upon myself to deny, but I cannot see that the schemes proposed to remedy this state of things are much to the purpose. For, to tell the truth, they are mostly superficial; they deal with effects when they should be going to the root of the evil; they are trying to allay the symptoms without getting at the cause of the disease.

What our country needs is more religion, and the only way, seemingly, it can get more religion is by teaching its children what religion means. We talk a great deal about duty and patriotism and self-sacrifice and the beauty of citizenship, and we have laid in quite a stock of fine phrases which are trotted out in the Press on every possible and impossible occasion. But what do these things signify, what meaning can they convey to those who have never been taught that the duty we owe to our fellows rests on a deeper and firmer foundation than the mere preservation of a society on strictly utilitarian grounds? Not unnaturally, the citizen who is told that he owes a duty to the State is apt to be inconveniently curious concerning the nature and origin of his obligation. And when he finds that it apparently springs from some presumed social contract between himself and the rest of the community, can we wonder that he takes a far keener interest in the debt which the State owes him than in his own duty towards the State?

I am, myself, among those who condemn this latter-day insistence on personal "rights" and "privileges" to the neglect of corresponding duties and obligations. But I recognise—and I think it is high time that we all should recognise—that if you attempt to run a State without religion, if you base your demands from your neighbour on purely human and utilitarian grounds, you are building on a shifting and a sandy soil, which can never stand the weight you are putting on it. And tinkering with the structure will never make the foundation more secure.

The wise man builds his house upon a rock, and it is upon the rock of religion that our modern society needs to be rebuilt, if it is to stand firm and four-square against the gathering forces of disruption and disunion.

XXI

"THE SIMPLE LIFE FOR ME"

Society has got a new craze, new in form, that is to say, but not in substance. For the return to the Simple Life, which is what Society just now believes it is craving for, is a fancy or whim common to most ages in which an overdose of pleasure has bred ennui, and a surfeit of luxury has produced a temporary reaction.

Of course, there are different forms of the Simple Life. The millionaire, for example, could hardly be expected to enjoy, even for a week, the simplicity of life as lived by the farm labourer; and the pampered Society woman would not be likely to take kindly to the hard-working existence of the village house-wife who has to keep her home clean, look after half-a-dozen active youngsters, cook meals for the whole family, and provide them with sufficient food and clothing on a few shillings a week.

No, Society is not in search of such rude simplicity as that. To lead the Simple Life as Society understands it requires in the first place quite a respectable amount of money. It is not, in fact, a poor man's recreation. To

start with, one must buy a caravan or cottage, the initial expense of which counts for nothing in comparison with the sum that has then to be spent upon them to make them habitable. For this particular form of the Simple Life in reality is nothing but a variant of the vapid, useless, and luxurious existence which is common to so many mansions in Mayfair at the present day. The Simple Life, in short, is the Life of Pleasure transplanted from the town to the country; and the craze for it is nothing but another form of that craving for new emotions, of any kind, characteristic of our plutocratic generation. With the coming of the motor-car the week-end habit was enormously extended, and from that habit, in a large measure, has been evolved this fantastic desire for an artificial and extremely unprimitive simplicity of life.

When, I wonder, will such people realise that the Simple Life is not a matter of living in the town or the country, in a palace or a hovel, in an office or a farm-house; but rather that it is a question of the inner spiritual existence of a man. In this, as in almost everything else, we see the symptoms of that hopeless materialism which, like a canker, is eating its way so terribly into the national vitals. It is pathetic to watch the efforts of men and women, worn out and wearied with their round of joyless pleasure, to escape from their unhappy

existence; still more pathetic is it that these blasé voluptuaries should fancy that by changing their surroundings they can escape from themselves and their own shrivelled souls.

Yet even the most materially-minded of us can, if we like, lead a stern and simple life amid the most profuse luxury. Marcus Aurelius found it possible amid all the splendours of the Imperial Court of Rome. And what the pagan sceptic of old could do, cannot a modern Englishman contrive to accomplish? But then the Roman Emperor had his ideal, such as it was, which he tried to live up to, and nowadays many of us have not even that.

The truth is, that the Simple Life is, in reality, nothing but the Christian Life—the life lived by the man who is honestly and sincerely endeavouring to do his duty according to the Christian standard of ethics. Such a man will have no feverish desires after extremes. His whole life will be simple, in whatever circumstances he may be placed; he will not be continually running to and fro, seeking distractions in a hundred ways, and finding unhappiness in all, but with a single mind and a single purpose he will steadfastly pursue his course to the goal which every man is meant to reach.

Men taste all the pleasures of the world and find them, as Solomon found them, nothing but vanity; and in despair they turn to new and paradoxical methods of satisfying their unsatisfied

spirit. When will they learn that lesson which even the world itself teaches them, that there is not and cannot be any rest or lasting happiness in this restless pursuit of earthly things? What is all this talk of the Simple Life save a confession that the lives people are leading are too complex, too much entangled with pursuits that are not germane to the end for which they were destined, too bound by chains which, forged by themselves, can be, if they will only realise it, readily struck off by themselves?

I am not pleading just now with these people to lead a saintly life. I merely ask them to begin by leading an ordinary Christian life. Not necessarily to give up their Mayfair residence or their costly cottage in the country, or their motor-car, but to regard these things from a different standpoint, to use them in a different spirit. There is a great deal of truth in the old saying concerning the burden of riches. The rich man ought to feel that he bears a burden, for, in sober fact, he has a tremendous responsibility placed upon his shoulders. Yet the moment he recognises that responsibility and faces it squarely and accepts it, in that moment his burden will be immeasurably lightened.

"Come to Me," said Christ, "all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." It was not only to the poor and sorrowing that this invitation was addressed. It was

meant equally for those who, having all they can desire in this world, think there can be nothing else worth living for than the gratification of their own selfish whims and passions.

Assuredly the Simple Life is the one life to which such people should turn—the life, that is to say, lived in accordance with the precepts of Christ. It is, perhaps, a sign of grace that they should, however vaguely, recognise that their existence is over-full of pleasure, that they should, in however feeble a fashion, endeavour to get away from their vicious round of excitement and extravagance; but they may rest assured that the mere turning from one style of worldly life to another will not serve them. But let them try the Christian Life, and I will guarantee to cure them of all their boredom and weariness of spirit.

There is another aspect of this Simple Life craze which I feel constrained to touch on here. There are certain people, by no means confined to one class, who have persuaded themselves, or who wish to persuade themselves, that the beasts of the field are the proper examples for rational human beings to follow. In other words, they would free life of its complexities by freeing it of all moral obligations. They will have no constraint, religious or social, put upon their desires, and in their anxiety to give free rein to the lower side of their nature, pose as the pioneers of a coming era when a crafty priest-

hood shall no longer have power to impose its will upon the imagination, or work upon the fears, of mankind.

We might dismiss such people, without much notice, as mere faddists, capable of doing little harm, were it not for the horrible doctrines of free love and immorality which they preach to a public not yet, thank Heaven, quite so gullible as to swallow them entire. But so artfully is the poison instilled, so carefully presented amid much that is harmless, that I fear many may be deceived by these specious advocates of abominable things.

They like to look upon themselves as advanced, but in truth their only idea of progress is to go backward, to put themselves on a level with the savage, and, under the pretence of remedying the errors, and simplifying the complexities, of civilisation, to return to the dark days of the pre-Christian era, when men had no thought but to gratify their passions, and no higher ideal than to make the most of their lives in this world.

"Let us return to Nature." That is the cry we hear raised to-day. "Nature," we are told, "knows no conventions, no soul-cramping limitations; Nature is free, as man should be. It is the priests who, for their own ends, have so fettered and bound him by their rules and regulations that he dare no longer call his soul his own."

No thinking man, I admit, could possibly be taken in by an argument that implied he was no better than an animal, but there are many amongst us, ignorant and empty-headed, who may easily be deceived even by such transparent fallacies. I do not wish to exaggerate the power of such preaching. But I recognise a real danger in it, and I have therefore thought it a duty to raise my voice against this latest horrible and subtle plea for the leading of an immoral life.

XXII

MARRIAGE

I.—Wedded Love

It would be a waste of time to insist on the Christian and sacred character of marriage as regards men with whom Christians have nothing in common either in religion or philosophy. But living as I do in a Christian country, is it altogether presumptuous on my part to hope that my fellow-countrymen, in the mass, still accept, at least in theory, the Christian standard of life and its duties? The professed atheist, like the professed pagan, may regulate his conduct by rules that are based on no higher conception of ethics than such as appeal to him personally as logically necessary for the preservation of society, but the believing Christian must surely acknowledge a firmer foundation for his system of morality.

The claims of the materialist to be more practical than the Christian would be amusing were it not for the grave issues involved. For, in point of fact, the Christian has, or should have, no haziness as regards his future existence. From God he comes and to God he must return. There is, in reality, no "riddle of the universe"; and the real problem for us to

solve is not concerned with our "whence" or "whither," but with our "here" and "now."

What, then, is the mission of man on this earth? It is not to waltz—I had almost written tango—through life in a continuous round of pleasure and careless ease. It is not to say, "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." It is not to plunge into sensuality and gratify the lowest desires and cravings of the flesh, until the conscience is seared and unresponsive, the mind depraved, the body ruined, and the soul lost.

It is not to concentrate every energy upon the building up of a fortune, to rack the brain, spoil the temper, and choke up the avenues to the soul with the sordid growths of greed and avarice.

The mission of man, "so noble in reason, so infinite in faculty, in apprehension so like God," is to work out the beast and savage, and so to evolve the higher and spiritual side of his nature that he may be fit to take his place hereafter in one of those "many mansions" in which it should be his sure and certain hope one day to dwell.

For the evolution and attainment of the great ideal of manhood and womanhood which the Christian religion places before us, marriage is, for the generality of men, the safest and surest means. Properly used, there is no better school in which to learn self-reverence, self-mastery, self-control;

no finer discipline through which to rise more surely in the spiritual life than a Christian marriage. There are those, it is true, who are called to an even higher state, but such are exceptions to the general rule, and what I have to say on this subject is addressed to the ordinary man—"the man in the street."

Have we not been assured that there is no more subtle master under Heaven, not only to keep down the lower desires of our nature, but to fill the mind with great thoughts and the heart with beauteous aspirations, than the "maiden passion for a maid"? The sweet chastity of maidenhood is the source of the strong courage of manhood. The man who can write, "I have become engaged to a girl," can add, "and I am learning to strive after the highest and to seek the best."

But this noble result will follow only from the love that is pure, not from the mad infatuation of passion. To be what is commonly called "madly in love" is no test of the reality of love. Indeed the very intensity of such an emotion indicates rather the presence of passion alone, than which there is no traitor more cunning or cruel. One fierce outburst may leave behind a sting the pang of which will be felt for a lifetime, and the shame be irremediable. It is the privilege of woman to act from feeling, it is the duty of man to ignore feeling and follow reason.

When a young man says he is in ecstasies, he is not far from hysteria. Ecstasy and hysteria are both abnormal conditions, and, if he is in either, a man is in no state of mind to become engaged. Such aids to marriage as moonlight strolls, dreamy music, or worse still, rowdy companionship, ought to play no part in a man's final choice. Indeed, no self-respecting man could really be guilty of the error of becoming engaged without sane and sober consideration. I shall be told that love is a passion that so sweeps a man off his feet that his will and his reason are for the moment utterly overwhelmed—that he is, in a word, not responsible for his actions at such a time.

But that is precisely what I deny. If a man loves truly, he loves with his whole self, with his soul, his will and his reason as well as his body. I have no patience with those fanatics (unhappily they seem to be increasing in number) who are for ever talking about their "soul-mates," their "spiritual comrades" and so forth, but there is at least this to be said for them, that they represent, however partially, a certain revolt against the purely physical side of love, beyond which many men seem unable to progress.

I would lay it down, then, as an infallible rule that, if a young man finds himself so carried away by his feelings that he is unable to consider calmly the consequences of his marriage,

he may be sure that it is passion, and not love, which is dominating him. And, whatever popular novelists may preach, it is equally certain that every man has the strength of will, if he chooses to exercise it, to throw off such an obsession. Above all things, be it remembered, it is the function of love to give rather than to get; to find joy in bestowing, rather than to take pleasure in receiving.

There would be fewer unhappy marriages if men would but ask themselves, before taking the preliminary step, for what purpose they are entering the married state. Ought not one to enter it in order to realise oneself, to become a deeper and a truer man, to fulfil a God-given mission in time, and to reap a God-given reward in eternity? To be, moreover, the brightness and stay of some good woman's life, and, as far as in one lies, to lift her on to a plane of holy and happy living?

Let a man then make his choice in the light of these considerations. Let him raise his mind from mere prettiness and shallow sentimentality to thoughts of higher and more enduring things. To every young man contemplating marriage I would earnestly say: Choose not the flighty, showy, smoking-room girl, however superficially attractive or dazzling. Choose a girl in whom the virtues flourish, one in whom you will find not a little to venerate and reverence. Seek a comrade rather than a charmer. So will your

affection continue to grow until the end, and prove to be, not a lurid, fierce flame of passion, but a sun-glow of life-long duration, shedding the light of love and the warmth of joy abroad from both your hearts.

Old-fashioned advice, do you think? I admit it is not up-to-date. But are all old things necessarily wrong, and is every new idea, of its own nature, unquestionably right? After all, the so-called "up-to-date" ideas are only a reversion to the savage man's instincts, and are even more old-fashioned, therefore, than the others. The modern man is a curious being, and more than half a child in the eagerness with which he will pounce on some long-forgotten toy, dragged out from a dusty cupboard, and pretend that it is the very latest device of some ingenious inventor of playthings. But it is my firm belief that most men are better than they profess to be. And there are few, I think, who will not, in their candid moments, admit the reality of the distinction between love and passion, or recognise the altruism of the one, the egotism of the other.

II.—Husband and Wife

It is said—and I believe statistics support the statement—that there is a growing distaste for marriage. Many apparently reasonable arguments are set forth on behalf of the man, yes,

and the woman, who deliberately and of set purpose avoids the marriage state. Pressure of economic conditions, the desire for a freer life, fear of added responsibilities, the necessity for individual development, and all kinds of curious reasons are alleged in excuse of this tendency. But, at bottom, we may safely say that, save in a few exceptional cases, selfishness is the sole motive which sways the modern man or woman in this matter.

I do not intend to argue the point. Nor, indeed, should I have alluded to it even in passing were it not for the fact that many apologists for marriage are, almost unconsciously, disseminating a new view of that holy state altogether opposed to its real meaning and object. The idea is, apparently, that marriage is to be made more "attractive"—on the same principle, I suppose, that some quite worthy clergymen and ministers seek to entice larger congregations to their churches and chapels by what I can only describe as exhibition side-shows.

The latest view of marriage, then, is to regard it as a condition of existence in which each of the parties has the fullest liberty to do as he or she pleases. I am not now referring to the grosser exaggerations of this doctrine, concerning which I shall have something to say later; for the moment I wish to examine only the more moderate view which contemplates the

complete separation of the real lives of the couple who have taken each other for better or worse.

The argument seems to be based on the assumption that it is quite impossible to expect two frail human beings to spend their lives together with any real happiness to either. Inevitable quarrels, in themselves of no consequence, are treated as though they must raise insurpassable barriers between husband and wife. We all jar on each other at times, but it appears that a man and his wife cannot get on each other's nerves for a moment without a deadly feud at once arising.

Those people, who would have a married couple go their own road in all the ordinary details of life, are lacking in a sense of proportion. But it is really bizarre, even in these grotesque times, to find the proposition put forward in sober earnestness, that the less a husband and wife see of each other, the more affectionate they are likely to remain. I can imagine that a certain friendship might exist between two persons thus situated, but they certainly could not be regarded as fulfilling the duties of the married state.

Duties! That is the word—a word I know which is anathema to many people at the present day. Yet, whether a man dislikes the notion of duty or not, experience will teach him, sooner or later, that it is not good for

him to trifle with his sense of duty, and that should he neglect it, he will find that he has done so at a heavy cost. You cannot fight against God and win.

Now, to put it on the lowest ground, would it not be much more sensible for married people, instead of running away in this cowardly fashion from their responsibilities and duties towards each other in the selfish pursuit of feverish pleasures, to face the facts, and endeavour so to order their lives as to promote the real happiness of both?

Man and woman are in many respects complementary to each other; and therefore is it not the mission of each to complete the other and to be completed by the other, so that the happiness and perfection of both depends upon each asking and receiving from the other, as has been well said, what the other alone can give?

What other basis for marriage can there be but union, and how can there be any true marriage-union when it is the chief occupation of each partner to see as little of the other as possible? In wedlock, as it has ever been regarded in Christendom, the man and woman become indissolubly one, and live on, each ministering to each, each serving the other, each merging their life into that of the other, each losing self to find it more fully and better expressed in the other. Thus, and thus only,

does wedded life become in deed and in truth a love-life, revealing itself in terms of mutual service. For he who loves most has the most, not to get, but to give. Self-abnegation is the means in and through which love finds expression.

The marriage state, then, being a state of love, must also be one of self-sacrifice. This sacrifice, in the deepest sense, is not to be more on one side than the other. In the blending processes of married life, the mingled sacrifice of the husband and the wife make the happiness and completeness of the home.

Men and women, therefore, must recognise that the keynote of marriage is sacrifice, and if they undertake its duties and its joys in that spirit, they will not find the trials of married life too heavy to be borne. They will not want to be everlastingly away from each other; they will not want to meet each other on the footing of acquaintances, or to have each their own circle of friends into which the other has no right of entry.

But while the sacrifices demanded by the marriage state are common to men and women alike, their duties, of course, differ widely, and it is here that troubles and misunderstandings so frequently arise.

Now, with all due respect to the militant ladies whose activities have been till lately so conspicuous, I do not propose to say anything about

the superiority of either sex over the other. There cannot, and ought not to be, any question of the superiority or inferiority of either sex, for the differences between them are chiefly psychological. Man is mind and woman is heart. He rules by reason, she legislates by love. He is logical, she is emotional, and where he is satisfied to judge by a nice balancing of pros and cons, she is content to trust to her intuition.

Not many days ago a Frenchwoman said to me: "Men are like regular verbs; knowing one, I know them all, in all their moods and tenses."

"That may be," I answered, "but women are like your French irregular verbs, and unless a man studies them individually in their every peculiar mood and tense, he will be likely to misunderstand them, much to his own discomfiture."

The first business of a bride and bridegroom is to study one another, and to get to understand one another. They must make allowances for inevitable differences, differences of sex, of education, of taste, of tradition, and each must try to be satisfied with what he or she finds in the other, and each must endeavour to promote that other's interests, not in one particular, but in everything. This is their mission, and they must face it bravely and hopefully.

And now I have something to say to the husband, and it is this: Be kind and thought-

ful to your wife. Bear with her little feminine ways. Never attempt to check the flowing tide of her talk. This is a cardinal rule; whatever else you may try to check in your wife, never check her chatter. Remember, a woman needs many safety-valves and outlets for her temperament. Be patient and tender with her. Don't say sharp and cutting things, and don't be too fond of speaking your mind and saying what you mean and meaning what you say, as one having authority. Consider the sensitive character of a woman's disposition, and humour her in every possible way. Don't be hasty, but bear yourself with that manliness which will never cause a woman pain.

Further than all this, I would ask the husband not to be careless of the little likes and dislikes of his wife. They are a part of her, and must be counted with. Most women have a passion for finery in some form or other; jewellery, or dress, or both. Well, give her what you can, even if it costs you some sacrifice, and let her feel it is from you, and that you have not given her what has cost you nothing. Praise her and make much of her, and above all, remember that a woman's thirst for sympathy is like that of the flowers for sunshine. If you are always away at the club, if you are never thinking of her, if you neglect to write when away from her, others may come and offer her what you withhold, and who will then be

to blame? If anything goes wrong in married life I usually put the blame on the man. He is the stronger, and he should overcome himself and protect the wife of his heart, lending her a strong arm on which to lean.

And what of the wife's own duties towards her husband? First and specially, I would remind her that she must keep the home in good order. Man appreciates a beautiful home, possibly even more than a woman does, because he is in it less. Let the sun stream through your windows upon rooms tastefully arrayed, and bearing, from kitchen to attic, the traces of a true, wifely devotion to the home.

And keep a good table. There is very much in that. Even in the Christian man there is much of the animal. Let it be impossible for any invidious distinction to be drawn between meals out and meals at home. The dinner may be simple, but let it be good and hot and daintily served.

Let the wife, too, remember always to be neat and smart, even when she is quite alone with her husband. A man likes to see his wife well turned out, and it is her business to look pleasing in his eyes. Many women dress to look better than other women, and consequently they overdress. Let her consult his taste rather than that of her modiste.

Do not get into the habit of contradicting all your husband's cherished views, from mere

perversity, but study to gratify, within reasonable limits, his whims and fancies. Woman has no monopoly of fads. Never offer him lame and impossible excuses, be frank and aboveboard in everything, and endeavour, as far as you can, not to keep him waiting about while you change your dress or put on your "things."

Try to make the wheels of life's chariot run smoothly. Never preach at your husband, never nag, never scold in public, never cry "on purpose." These tricks of women often bring them what they want, but they may in the process kill a husband's love. No man wants to be teased, and no man wants to be pestered. And no wife ever gains in the long run by any tactics that are a breach of the law of love.

Have I spoken only of the trivial, of the little things? Believe me, it is these that count in marriage far more than the big things. Most of us are destined to lead humdrum lives, apart from which it must not be forgotten that when marriage ends in tragedy, it is more often than not to small beginnings, to bickerings and misunderstandings, that the tragedy may be traced.

But if a husband and wife, knit together in the closest of ties, build up a home which shall be a harbour of refuge from the storms of life, a temple in which love reigns and triumphs, a sanctuary in which holiness dwells; if they are courteous and chivalrous to one another, and do not let the discord of quarrelling and wrang-

ling mar their peace; then surely they will have no need to resort to artificial means for keeping alive that affection whose natural flowering can alone ensure their lasting happiness and joy in each other's company.

Disappointments, sorrows, and troubles are inevitable. There is no life without them. They are the test of our fidelity and our truth, nor will the shirking of our duties keep them away. But when husband and wife are one physically, one morally, one mentally, one in a supreme effort to sink all differences and to face all difficulties, then indeed they may be said to have solved not only the secret of a happy marriage, but the problem of life itself. To each I would say: "Measure thy life by loss and not by gain, not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth."

III.—Divorce Made Easy

It is not surprising that in a day when men speak of philosophy without reason, of morality without sanction, and of religion without dogma, there should be persons who contend that marriage ought to be binding only until some danger zone of life is reached, or even until by mutual consent the married couple agree to part. We have among us men who unblushingly advocate what is called leasehold marriage, which is a respectable term for the hellish idea of free love. It seems

that the notion is gaining ground, more or less among all classes, that marriage is nothing more than a bilateral contract, entered into by mutual arrangement, and easily terminable at any time.

To such a state of mind have some of our fellow-countrymen come! Putting aside the blasphemy involved in such teaching, what is this but a conspiracy against the honour of manhood and the pure dignity of womanhood? It is a dragging down of marriage from the sublime heights to which Christianity has raised it, to rob it of its poetry and spiritual power, by turning it into a business transaction on a level with drawing a cheque or buying a house.

For if marriage is nothing better than a bilateral contract, there is no reason in the world why it should not be treated as a matter-of-fact business arrangement, a transaction into which enters nothing higher than ordinary commercial buying and selling.

But is marriage a mere contract, civil or otherwise? The Law treats it as such, I know, but in certain matters the Law is not always a safe guide. Let me take an easily understandable analogy. Everyone will admit that, rightly or wrongly, the first debts that a man of the world considers himself in honour bound to pay are his card and his betting debts. He may dismiss with a laugh the importunities of his tailor, the groans of his grocer, the bullying of his butcher, but he will strain every nerve, he will resort to

every device to meet the obligations he has incurred on a racecourse or in a gambling den.

Yet the Law lays it down that such debts are no debts at all, and that, legally speaking, no one has any claim on him in respect of them.

I am not concerned here with either the ethical or the legal aspects of gambling. I merely cite the analogy to show that there are cases where the Law cannot be considered in relation to conduct, and that men will regulate their actions rather according to their own standard of honour or morality than by the strict interpretation of a civil statute.

If this be so, how much more should the Christian hold fast to the belief that, however the Law may regard it, marriage is something far holier and higher than a civil contract, that may be rescinded by mutual consent at any time the contracting parties think fit?

No Christian can, in fact, be content with a "civil marriage," or believe that, in marrying, he is entering into an agreement of no more importance, commercially speaking, than the renting of a house. He knows, none better, that marriage is a moral and a religious contract, implying a union between man and woman so close, so intimate, so sublime and sacred, that it becomes a mysterious religious rite in which the contracting parties themselves, as the sacred officiating ministers of it, call upon God Almighty

to witness that they are pledged to adhere to each other until death do them part.

The terms on which bride and bridegroom make their vows, the very language which they utter before the altar, proves beyond question that on their wedding-day they pass into a state of life which can only be ended, and into a relationship which can only be resolved, by the hand of death.

No bride and bridegroom who for the words "till death us do part," were to substitute such phrases as "till we desire a change," or "till something better turns up," would be held by any Christian person to be in any real sense married at all. Before now, I have heard people contend—and it is an absurd, a cowardly, and an irrational contention—that they are not responsible for the wording of the marriage rite. They acknowledge that they repeated the words the Church puts into the mouths of those who are to be united, but they did not frame the service and ought not, so they argue, to be held any more liable for the severity and old-fashioned nature of its expressions than an Anglican clergyman is for the wording of the Thirty-nine Articles. No. They did not frame the marriage service —and it is a great and a grand thing that the services of the Catholic Church are enshrined in unalterable terms—but they did in the most solemn way freely utter the vow of life-long duration, they did publicly, in the sight of God

and the people assembled, endorse the language of the Church. And from that vow nothing in life can release them.

I have often been asked whether, under any given circumstances—exceptional and possibly hard and trying circumstances—a married couple would be justified in dissolving their marriage and entering into a new alliance. I can only answer that question as many other questions about Christian practice must be answered. We have got to follow Christ's teaching. And on this matter His commands are plain enough. "Whosoever shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." Hence the Pauline direction: "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth."

What binds one party binds the other also. Man and wife by the Christian law are indissolubly one. There may be in certain cases, which are clearly defined, legal separation—alas, for the necessity even of that. But even then the tie is not wholly severed, so that, until death releases them, every married couple must bear for better or worse the consequences of their solemnly plighted troth.

The end and object for which marriage was ordained and instituted seems to be forgotten nowadays by many people. It was never meant to be a state of life in which passion should run riot, a soulless pursuit of the flesh-pots of Egypt. Even the old pagans, with all their licence, never

contemplated marriage as a mere device for self-gratification, or thought of it as abolishing the necessity for temperance and self-abnegation. Yet there are nominal Christians in our midst to-day whose gospel is the degrading creed of the Hedonist. They have sold their birthright for a mess of sensuous pottage, and they have become "without understanding" in their rebellion against the ordinance of Him Whom they profess to follow. How these truths are brought home to us under the chastisement of war!

The clamour for easier divorce and laxer divorce laws is very loud in the land just now, and, to our shame be it said, the cry is supported by many who call themselves Christians. Frankly, I find it impossible to understand the attitude of such men. Even the unbeliever, who is sincerely desirous of maintaining the ethical and moral standard of society, is wont to tread circumspectly in approaching this difficult question, for he realises to the full what dreadful consequences, even on the material side, may follow the granting of too great facilities for divorce. Yet among the loudest voices raised to-day in favour of an easy legal dissolution of the marriage tie are those of professing Christians. What more disheartening thought can there be than this? What hope can there be for the stability of the social fabric when its foundations are being undermined by these men, worse than foreign spies in our midst? Leave

divorce between man and wife to the hand of Death. Keep, you, your hands off. So would I address them.

IV.—Race Suicide

Not so many years ago large families in this country were the rule rather than the exception, while childlessness was the greatest misfortune that could befall a married couple. The childless wife was an object of commiseration in that, though married, she had never tasted the holy happiness of maternity, which was held in those days to be perhaps the greatest of all earthly joys.

I have already referred to the Hedonist view of marriage, as exemplified by those people who crush their consciences into the temporarily satisfying belief that wedded life is merely a state for providing additional facilities for fresh pleasure and self-enjoyment, without any corresponding duties or responsibilities. Such people have, no doubt, always existed. They certainly did so at the time I speak of. But this, at least, must be set to their credit, that they did not seek to evade the responsibility of having children. They may have been careless or negligent parents, but they, at any rate, could not be accused of living entirely for themselves.

Can the same be said of us to-day? Is it not, on the contrary, becoming increasingly common for young men and women to marry with the deliberate and express understanding that no

children are to be permitted to interfere with the irresponsible and luxurious existence they contemplate?

In England, thank God, in spite of the progress of these most abominable errors, there are still overwhelming numbers who recognise that there are few responsibilities so sacred in character as that with which wedded couples are charged as parents. The best people realise this: that, because of the sacred trust which has been committed to them—of increasing and multiplying the human family—God has made unity and perpetuity the characteristic notes of wedded life. Alas! across the Channel our Allies are now suffering for their deliberate shortage of the birth-rate. Instead of having a population of 70,000,000 to draw upon in the struggle with Germany's 67,000,000, France has but 38,000,000, while we, in these British Isles, are sadly below our proper strength in numbers.

We are constantly reminded of the hardships involved for some in carrying out to the full their duties in this respect. But what about the endless tale of hardships and wrongs resulting from neglect of duty? There is no law, social, civil or divine, that does not press heavily upon some. It is when a man is hard hit that he reveals his mental state and his real moral character. If duty is hard to do, the effort of doing it builds up a man in all that is best.

It is difficult to understand how any Christian

people who believe in a revelation can deliberately evade the loftiest and holiest duties of their calling. Yet they do evade those duties, and they suffer the consequences in a lower standard of character, and in the harm that comes of bartering principle for expediency.

I have nothing to say to those married people who, for one cause or another, cannot exercise their legitimate rights. What I do wish to impress upon all who are in the married state is, that every right they possess should be exercised rightly. There is no greater plague on the face of the earth to-day than that which is being spread by married people who want to enjoy life while shirking its responsibilities. Marriage with them seems to have lost its message and its meaning, and the state in which they live, instead of ennobling and beautifying, not infrequently so debases them that their lives end in divorce, insanity, or even self-destruction. The foul contagion of this pestilence must be arrested, men and women must be reminded that we are members one of another, and this country, which professes the Christian religion, must be awakened to the significance of the plague which is rampant in its homes.

It is one of the saddest phases of this subject that, in spite of the appalling consequences of the profanation of marriage which confront us on every hand, many married people persistently refuse to learn from the experiences of others,

and speak, not only openly, but even boastfully, of what I can only call a sin that cries to Heaven for vengeance.

Thus does the artificial and selfish creed of the day render men and women shameless and careless before God and man. A generation ago vice was looked upon as corruption; to-day we are asked to regard it as a stage of evolution, an inevitable result of the operation of certain influences, the sign, not of a fall, but of a normal and healthy growth in life. Man is seeking to become a law unto himself, and he would weave the shallow subtleties of infidel philosophers into a defence of that reign of passion which he would proclaim.

But passion has got to be brought into subjection. These demoralising views have spread far and wide. In the name of all that is sacred I say it is time to call a halt. When wives refuse the privilege of motherhood, because it interferes with the London season, or with the hunting season, or because they cannot be bored with a nursery, or because there is not enough room in their flat, or because they themselves are not strong enough to bear what they do not like, it is about time, I think, to read the Riot Act. How such women profane the law of God!

But are not husbands even more to blame?

Some men try to persuade themselves that they have a right to regulate their state because

of their small income, and because science has come to their aid in this matter. According to this doctrine, which I have lately seen advocated, it is quite clear that any city clerk who is clever enough not to be found out, is free to rob his employer, and indeed any murderer who is sure of escaping detection, may proceed to do his victim to death. I am afraid there are not a few in our midst whose deeds must be called by the ugly name of race-suicide. The decline in the birth-rate is becoming every day more and more terribly significant. Where will it end?

Not long ago when I was denouncing this vice to which I am now referring, an educated man exclaimed: "And what have we our freedom for, except to exercise it?" To which I replied: "And what, pray, have we our police for, except to stop us from exercising it?"

Liberty does not spell licence. Liberty brings with it responsibilities which necessarily cramp our absolute freedom. And much as men and women of to-day dislike being reminded of their responsibilities, they will not in the long run find any profit to themselves in ignoring them.

Can any sane Christian suppose that he has been given his free choice between good and evil for no purpose whatever—that it can make no difference to him or his fellows whether he chooses the good or the evil? Even the Ag-

nostic or the Atheist is ready with very valid reasons why every good citizen should fulfil his obligations towards the State. And we, as a people, must be sunk low indeed if even the materialist condemns, on social grounds, our mode of living.

It was the Founder of Christianity Who set marriage upon an imperishable basis, and thereby laid the foundation, in and through family life, of modern society, and of all social evolution; and has the Christian to be reminded of his duty by those who profess no allegiance to Christ?

The family is the unit that builds up the State. And in the happiness of the family circle there are gained those impressions which make or unmake, long years after, when children have grown to manhood, the destinies of men and empires.

Those, therefore, who seek to weaken the bonds of matrimony, those who would keep from the home influences which are essential to it, are working to undermine the very foundation upon which the social order rests.

I shall doubtless be severely criticised for daring to touch upon a subject in regard to which, it is held, every married person has a right to express and practise his or her own theories. I shall be told that I am wanting in decency, in delicacy, in tact, even in commonsense; that married people must judge of these

matters for themselves, and decide them as best suits their own convenience. But, as I have tried to show, this is not a matter upon which the individual has the right to decide, and if I were to be silent while the springs of our national life are being poisoned, just because an outcry may be raised against me, I should be not a Christian Englishman, but a time-serving miserable coward.

XXIII

THE SERVANT PROBLEM

Most of us recognise that, whether we like it or not, many of the old class barriers are being swept away by the new democratic spirit; but are we equally resolved to accept and make the best of the new condition of things? It is no good sitting on the sea-shore and wringing one's hands over the fact that the incoming tide is about to demolish the beautiful sand castle we have just built, and it is equally fatuous for the modern mistress to lament over the "old-fashioned servant" of fifty years ago, who "knew her place" and did not presume to ask for evenings off and days out, and who had, moreover, no new-fangled notions of what was due to her.

Whether the well-to-do classes like it or not, it is time that they made up their minds to accept the fact that domestic servants of both sexes have altogether different views of life, as well as of service, from what were held a generation or two ago. Naturally enough, most girls, after the so-called education they pass through in primary or secondary schools, feel

no inclination to go into service. Their ambition is to become clerks, typists, or shop-girls. Even as mill-hands they feel more free than as servants. Not only do these occupations seem to them to be less unworthy, and to bring better pay, but they also afford them more chances, and give them more leisure.

Of course it is an error of the gravest kind to look upon any sort of honest work as unworthy or in any way degrading. But, when all is said and done, are these people to be blamed for trying to better themselves? On the contrary, they are entirely to be commended.

I emphasise this aspect of the servant question because I want to bring it home to the modern mistress how important it is for her home peace to try and understand these things from the servant's standpoint. The day has gone by when the servant could be ignored as a person who had no right to have "views." The time has passed for ever when masters and mistresses could treat their servants as chattels, and dictate to them what they should wear, or do, or eat. Servants resent overmuch interference, and she is a wise mistress who has learned how to have her way in the house without unduly asserting herself. I venture to suggest that the best thing to do after engaging a girl is to observe what she can do, and what she will not or cannot do.

One thing is quite certain. It is a waste of

time to look for the ideal in any walk of life. The servant who fulfils all the requirements of some people has not yet appeared upon the earth. The only sound philosophy is to make the best of the service at one's command, never forgetting that the servant has her rights as well as her duties, and that she is fully aware of the fact.

All servants, especially under-servants, need from their employers a little personal interest—a word of praise, of encouragement, and of thanks. Some mistresses begrudge any expression of appreciation, lest it should lead to the last thing on earth they care to hear—an application for higher wages. It is not in such a spirit that the internal organisation of the home can be smoothly worked. Even paid servants require a little encouragement.

Then there is the important duty of providing leisure time for all servants, particularly in a house where much entertaining is done. Servants cannot be treated as if they were machines capable of work without feeling exhaustion. Everyone requires relaxation and rest.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not one of those who teach that servants should work no more than is good for their appetites. On the contrary, a bright, busy staff of servants who are kept up to their work, will be found, as a rule, to grumble the least.

Observation has led me to the conclusion

that the present difficulty—which is, I admit, a real one—in getting good servants, is by no means altogether due either to over-education or to the spread of democratic ideas; or even, as some people are inclined to assert, to the growing love of pleasure among the wage-earning classes.

The fact is that of late years, masters and mistresses, taking them as a class, have set their servants a bad example in small things as well as in great. If the lives of master and mistress are without method, their day without order, how can the servants be expected to be methodical and punctual?

If a lady orders luncheon at half-past one and returns home with unexpected guests at a quarter-past two, it is quite possible that the *entrées* may be spoiled, the *légumes* cold, and the *soufflé* ruined. But let her ask herself—whose is the fault? It is bad enough to be exacting, it is worse to be irrational. Mistresses might even be reasonable enough to intimate occasionally to their maids at what hour after midnight they may be expected home.

Is it not a pity, too, that employers of servants are not more equable, less irritable and put out by every trivial little thing that goes wrong? I am aware that the modern rush of life is exceptionally wearing to the nerves, but is that a reason why a woman should vent her ill-humour on her servants? Moreover, a woman

who cannot control herself will certainly never be able to control others.

One of the reasons, again, why servants nowadays are more like "hands" than "friends," taking little more personal interest in the home than they would in a factory, is that their masters and mistresses themselves do not seem to treasure their house as a home. In a sense, it is too often more like an hotel, to which are invited, not so much members of the family and intimate friends, as people of fashion and persons of notoriety, in whatever way that notoriety may have been gained. Servants who are engaged to wait upon house parties of this sort regard their service from a purely business standpoint, and look upon the guests as merely so many extra machines for the production of tips.

The master and mistress who seek for devoted service from their servants, who ask from them a personal interest in the well-being of the household, will have to make a point of creating a real English home, with real English traditions and real English relations—as distinct from familiarities—between employer and employed.

I come to a far more serious aspect of the subject, but it is impossible to pass it by in silence. How often is not the example of those upstairs the ruin of those downstairs? The rehearsal may be heard in the drawing-room, but the actual play not infrequently takes place in

the servants' hall. Nothing nowadays is hidden, and nothing can be hidden. The revelations of the Press have sharpened the wits of dependants, and the newest scullery-maid and the youngest stable-boy know pretty well everything about everybody who crosses the threshold of the house. It is not surprising that in slumdom is known what never ought to have reached villadom, and that the misdoings of a certain section of the community, which, as it is called "the best society," ought to set the best example, are the common talk of circles where those who give occasion for scandal are only known by name.

Only when men and women seriously try to rule their own lives and their own homes by the immortal principles of the Christian religion, will they get good sense from others. Example and atmosphere have more influence upon all of us than we are always willing to admit. We may talk as we like about the growth of wrong ideas, the ceaseless pursuit of pleasure and the lack of interest in their work characteristic of the modern servants, but these things are fostered by the spectacle of the lives not so uncommonly lived by the wealthier classes, and I say that the main reason for the poor service rendered to-day, where it exists, lies in the indifference to all that constitutes home, morally and actually, of those who should set the standard of living for the nation at large. To

what a noble and uplifting mission masters and mistresses are deputed by their calling. It would be well for England if only they were to realise it. In this, as in other domestic and social matters, we are given a great and noble lead by our beloved King and Queen.

XXIV

"DIVINE DISCONTENT"

Once upon a time, when men's minds were simpler and more direct, and the world less sophisticated, contentment was reckoned a virtue, and discontentment something worse than a fault. But so topsy-turvy are our modern ideas, so wholly have we lost the power of thinking clearly, that to-day we set the discontented man upon a pedestal, and despise the contented man as of no earthly use in this busy, hustling world. It is a curious sign of the times, and will perhaps repay a little investigation.

A case I heard of the other day will illustrate my meaning, though I cannot vouch for its truth, since my informant had only got it himself at secondhand.

The very big head of a very big business indeed was descending the staircase of his very big offices, when there met him a promising member of the staff who had only recently joined the firm. The very big business man greeted his employee with a gracious smile.

"Well, Mr. B.," he said, "how are you getting on? Everything all right? Quite satisfied and happy?"

"Very much so, thank you," answered the other guilelessly, "I've nothing to grumble about."

"Quite contented, eh?"

"Quite, thank you."

"Ah——" the big employer drew a long breath. "Well, Mr. B., I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you won't do for me. I want men who aren't satisfied, who want to get on, who are ambitious. Good-day to you."

And the unfortunate man, who had so thoughtlessly given expression to his contentment, duly received his dismissal.

That is the spirit of the age—the "get on or get out" idea—which resents, as an impertinence, the presence of a man who is so lost to all sense of self-respect as to be actually contented with his lot. The confusion of our fretted lives is reflected in a confusion of thought which makes us incapable of distinguishing between an honourable ambition and a stupid discontent, or between the "'umbleness" of a Uriah Heep and the cheerful contentment of the man who has placed his affairs in the hands of a Higher Power.

Thus it has come about that the "divine discontent" that is everywhere visible to-day, is actually looked upon as an excellent sign of the growing desire of man to better his condition, to make progress. Nothing, in point of fact, could be further from the truth. Our discontent

—that discontent of which we are beginning to feel quite proud—is not to be mentioned in the same breath with the laudable ambition which everyone of us ought to have, to do something in the world and for humanity before we are called away.

Our modern discontented frame of mind, then, is nothing to boast about. But it is easy enough to diagnose its cause. Ever since the middle of the last century our material progress has been extraordinary, but can anyone affirm that our moral and religious progress has kept pace with our increased comfort and prosperity? It was a sort of maxim with the early Victorians that people would become better as they grew more prosperous. Has that prediction been fulfilled in any appreciable measure?

Applied Science has ministered almost miraculously to the wants and ills of man's body, but it has never got the entrée to the sanctuary of his soul. In the laboratory there is nothing to neutralise the deadly poison of deadly sins; in the surgery nothing to mitigate the agonies of a tortured conscience; in the observatory nothing to correct the aberrations of the mind's fitful gleams of light; in the photographer's dark room nothing to fix with permanence the heights and beauty of virtue; in the dynamo-chamber nothing to generate zeal for God's glory or love of the brotherhood of humanity.

Is it cause for wonder that bitter discontent

with what one is, and what one has, is spreading amongst us with results far more fatal to the community than either cancer or consumption? Do we ask why man is wandering unsatisfied in the spacious palaces of his new material splendour? There is no other reason, there can be no other reason, than that the progress of irreligion has evicted him from the City of God, leaving his soul to shiver and starve on the rocks of despair, like a dog for whom no one cares. Well might such an one cry out with Chateaubriand: "Tell me, for pity's sake, where in the fields of philosophy to which you drive me, shall I find a family or a God?"

And it is this restless spirit of discontent on a grand scale that is now, I would have you note, being lauded and approved as giving proof of an intelligent desire on the part of mankind to "get on." If our present discontent was really "divine"; if we could, for a moment even, turn our attention from material things and examine into our spiritual state; if, in fine, we would acknowledge to ourselves the incontestable fact that, in casting aside Christianity, we have thrown away that without which all the wealth of the world is of no value, why then, in a spirit of real remorse and laudable discontent, we might well rejoice to have recognised that things were going badly with us.

That is the only sort of discontent which the Christian can or ought to permit himself to

feel. Instead of letting his mind be lifted up with worldly views and sordid aims, and the pride which comes from getting, and the vanity which comes from possession, and the deceit which comes from boasting, he will abase himself, and strike his breast, and do penance. Instead of giving way to his passion for gain, or envy, or carnal self-indulgence, lust of money, lust of the flesh, or lust for any of the vicious pleasures of this life, he will abase himself, and strike his breast, and do penance. Instead of trampling upon the weak in order that he may wax strong, of deriding the failure of his brother in order that he may have greater consideration in the eyes of the world, instead of accusing his God of being the Author of the evil he himself has wrought, he will bow down his head to the dust, and strike his breast, and do penance.

Do I shock the ultra-delicate sentiment of our over-refined moderns by uttering such words? I should rejoice to think I could stir their long-dormant consciences by galvanising them into any sort of life. But "penance" is a word that is fast passing out of common use in this country. The notion that a man, however irreligious and immoral his life may be, has anything to be ashamed of, is quite antiquated. We must be proud of our manhood, stand erect before God Himself (if He exists at all), and prove that we are no cringing curs,

but men who realise the strength and splendour of their nature. That is the latest anti-Christian teaching.

Ah, let us by all means be proud of our manhood, but let us first see to it that we are so living that we have a right to be proud of it. Let the virtuous man exult in his virtue, but is the vicious man equally to exult in his vice? Is the wicked man to glory in his wickedness, or boast of his immorality as proof of his manhood?

For that is where this new theory logically lands us, with the natural corollary that to repent, to do penance, to bow our heads in humility for our sins is unmanly and feeble, and shows a lack of proper spirit. No, however discontented we may be with our position in life, our place in the world, our surroundings, our lack of recognition, we must not on any account be discontented with ourselves. That is the modern teaching. Does it strike you as reasonable? My experience goes to show that in the measure in which a man has lofty and holy aspirations he is, I do not say discouraged, but disappointed, discontented even with his best efforts to live up to them. Conscious of his frailty, he humbly thanks God that he is not worse. "But for Thy mercy I should have dwelt in hell."

XXV

THE WOMAN MOVEMENT

I.—The Sex War

Woman has always played a conspicuous part in the history of this planet—a much more conspicuous part, indeed, than the modern representative of the sex cares to admit. Hitherto, however, she has been satisfied to remain behind the scenes, pulling the strings and making men, her puppets, dance according as she has willed, in the eyes of the world. But now a change has come over the spirit of her dream, she has grown restless and dissatisfied with her position, she is crying for a new toy, and she is out to get it by any means, fair or unfair.

For my part I think a great deal of this vague discontent is to be traced to the spirit of revolt against the established order of things everywhere observable among mankind. Speaking generally, woman does not possess the creative or pioneering instinct of the man. She is content, for the most part, to follow where man leads, and is it not significant that the militant suffragettes who have till recently been "staggering humanity" by their reckless methods of

seeking the vote, plead the example of men in justification of their mad actions?

This consideration, I admit, does not carry the matter much farther on the practical side. If it be true that the spirit of the age is the spirit of revolt, we have still to ask ourselves what it is that woman, quâ woman, is endeavouring to obtain and how far her demands are just, and to what extent they are unwise or worse. It will not do to dismiss the whole movement as a mere question whether women shall or shall not have the vote. The vote may stand as a symbol for much, but in itself it is relatively insignificant. Women want more—a great deal more—than the vote, and I think it is worth while attempting to discover the real aims of the movement as a whole.

Now in the first place it must be remembered that this is an imperfect world, and that we all of us—both men and women—are labouring under many grievances and many injustices. Look where we will, we see suffering and tyranny and oppression on all sides of us. Men, no less than women, and women, no less than men, have much to bear that is due indirectly to the callousness and the cruelty shown by their fellows, and it is surely the object of every right-thinking man or woman to lessen, if not to do away altogether with burdens which man's inhumanity to man has laid upon the world.

There are, I rejoice to think, many noble

spirits whose whole lives are being devoted to this end, who are unselfishly spending their days in ministering to the wants of their unfortunate fellow-creatures and who go about the world doing good and fighting evil wherever they find it. But these people would be the last to proclaim a class war, or a sex war, or enter upon any campaign directed against a particular section of society.

This is where the protagonists of the woman movement have fallen into a deplorable and hopeless error. With a sense of injustice rankling in their minds, and labouring under certain disabilities which no one can remove, they have, with a lack of logic which is only equalled by their want of common-sense, declared war against man! They will not be satisfied till they have pulled man down from the pedestal on which the wretched fellow has had the audacity to set himself, and erected thereon, I suppose, a statue of the Eternal Feminine as the supreme ruler of the world.

What could be more ludicrous or degrading, according to the observer's point of view, than the spectacle of a lot of hysterical women smashing windows, chaining themselves to railings, burning houses—and, alas, churches as well—as a protest against "man-made laws"? I have said before and I say it again, this is not a question of the vote. It is a desperate protest by a certain section of undisciplined women

against the fact that they are women. They have worked themselves up into a state of blind resentment against authority, human and divine, and they have no better way of showing it than by venting their uncontrolled rage on the male sex.

They want neither equality with man nor the chivalrous deference with which men have treated them in the past. They want to be recognised definitely as the superior sex, and that is why in their poor confused minds they have singled out man as the enemy, and have determined to make him acknowledge their supremacy. What imaginary wrongs they may be labouring under it is bootless to inquire, for we may be certain of this, that if women, as a sex, were so oppressed and tyrannised over as these viragoes would have us believe, every woman worthy of the name would be up in arms against the wrong-doers. As it is, I have heard the doings of the militants condemned in far more scathing terms by women than I have ever heard used by men.

Their real grievance, as I think, is just that they are women, while they scorn to be womanly. This modern parody of a woman, who screams from the top of a cart that she will have her rights, and who mauls policemen like a wild thing from the Zoo, apes everything mannish. She wants to dress like a man, stalk about and lounge like a man, smoke and drink like a man,

talk and swear like a man, and generally to behave herself, not like a refined lady, but like an unrefined man. While professing to hate and despise the other sex, she envies man the very things for which she might rightly hold him in contempt. She wants to be free to emulate his vices, to enjoy his so-called liberty of action, to share his opportunities for degradation.

The sight of this sort of woman on the war-path, or screaming and kicking in the dock, is very painful to an English gentleman taught in the old-fashioned school that he must pay deference and respect to women. He can only turn away his face from the spectacle, hoping and praying that this mad desire to be what God never intended her to be may in the course of time pass away as a phase of lunacy after some nervous strain.

It is a pity that the man-mimicking woman does not realise that if she insists in becoming unsexed and taking man's place in the world, she will soon meet with short shrift and be treated, not like a gentlemanly man, but like a bounder. I know that it is a common pose for women of this sort to pretend that they do not want the respect or deference which men are accustomed to pay to them, that they ask no other treatment from men than that which men accord to each other. Yet observe the inconsistency of the creatures! If a mob, roused to indignation and thoroughly exasperated by their

extravagances, venture on so much as a threatening movement in their direction, the woman, who but a moment before was demanding equality with man, instantly takes refuge under the cloak of her sex, and taunts her hearers with cowardice for lifting a hand against a defenceless female. If she is arrested and dragged off—I use the expression advisedly, for it is part of the militants' plan of campaign to give as much trouble as possible on these occasions—if, I say, she is dragged off to prison, she can find no words strong enough to condemn the "brutal" policemen who have had the misfortune to be compelled to take her to gaol. As for the scenes enacted in the police-courts by these furies, it makes one's cheek blush with shame to read of them.

"It is time we were armed," declared one of them not long ago on being sent to prison with the option of a fine, and cheers from the women at the back of the court greeted her remark. No comment on the state of mind revealed by such an aspiration is necessary.

The utter want of clear thinking—to name only one aspect of the movement—which characterised the whole of the militant campaign is shown by the determination of the women concerned not only to commit crimes but to claim exemption from punishment. By trading on their sex, they have discovered a means whereby they can assure themselves, no matter how grave

their offences, of escaping all unpleasant consequences. They can pose as martyrs, as victims of man's tyrannical cruelty on the one hand, and, on the other, thanks solely to man's dislike of proceeding to extremities against a woman, they are assured of immunity from the usual penalties that follow the commission of crime. They have discovered, in short, how to eat their cake and have it.

As an instance of how rapidly mental degeneration sets in in cases of this sort, let me relate the gist of a conversation I had not long since with a respectable Anglican clergyman who, to my astonishment, manifested no small measure of sympathy with the methods of the militant suffragettes. The burning down of churches and the disturbances created during services had, I fancy, aroused some misgivings in the worthy man's inner conscience, but for all that he still solemnly maintained that, on the whole, their motives were entitled to respect, though at times they might have been guilty of carrying matters too far.

And then, to my amazement, he entered into an elaborate comparison between the Early Christians and the mad militants, pointing out how in each case a small band of enthusiasts set out to convert the world, caring for nothing but that their views should prevail, and daring ridicule, torture and, as he hinted, death itself to further the cause they had at heart. Such an argument,

however irrational in itself, might have been intelligible in the mouth of one to whom religion meant nothing, and to whom Christ was but a name. Coming, as it did, from one who had pretensions to direct the spiritual welfare of many souls, it was both painful and shocking.

I will not insist on the complete want of understanding of what Christianity implies which is involved in such a position. My readers are capable of appreciating that for themselves. That a clergyman of the Church of England should father such sentiments makes the case all the sadder. But putting this aside for the moment, and apart from all question of the rights or wrongs of woman, we may well be astonished when we are asked to regard as "martyrs" those who, after committing sacrilege, arson and other crimes, refuse to take the consequences of their acts. I have yet to learn that the Christian martyrs after offending, as, humanly speaking, they did offend, against the laws of the Roman Empire by refusing to sacrifice to idols, ever protested by word or deed against the sufferings they had to endure. They did their best to open the eyes of their persecutors as to what they were doing, but, for the rest, they faithfully imitated the example of their Divine Master, and the words on their lips as they died were ever the same: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Let us hear no more then of this canting

nonsense concerning "martyrdom." For my part I consider the meanest criminal in revolt against society, who knows and is prepared to accept the consequences of his crime, a better specimen of the race than the wild women who in their frenzied insanity go raging up and down the country in a senseless endeavour to prove the justice of their demands by inflicting injustice and loss on others. Wonderful to narrate, we seem to know how to conduct a world-wide war but are helpless when attacked by the vicious suffragette. Well may England in her dilemma have been the laughing-stock of Europe. "Why," they used to exclaim on the Continent, "they are afraid in England of a militant girl; she defies a whole Government."

II.—Lust and Licence

There is one aspect of the woman question which no one who calls himself a Christian, or who holds firmly by the truths of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, can fail to regard with grave apprehension. The particular views put forward by the more "advanced" women have not—I rejoice to be able to think and say it—made much headway in this country. But no one can deny that they have gained some sort of footing among a certain section of women, even here, and no priest would be worthy of his office, no Christian

worthy to call himself such, who did not issue the strongest protest and the most solemn warning against such fatal errors, when opportunity served.

The advocates of Women's Rights, if I understand them properly, have been, like a great many men, by the way, agitating for emancipation, for freedom. Well, that word "freedom" is a rather nebulous expression, and Heaven forbid that I, or anyone else, should deny to any single woman such a legitimate measure of liberty as will enable her to exercise all her talents, to express her whole character as fully as her nature will allow.

Her demand for the vote, for higher wages, for greater opportunity, for a wider education, for less dependence upon man; all these things may be right or they may be wrong. It is not for me to say. But I have something to say to woman, and very emphatically, too, when she passes from such demands as these and begins to question the sacramental character of marriage, the value of religion, the foundations of Christianity itself.

If anything could ruin this Woman Movement, one would have thought, it would be this attack on the sanctity of the home, this open and shocking declaration of war on morality, this shameful and unashamed advocacy of the diabolical doctrine of free love. That women should, in a moment of passion, yield to temp-

tation and fall is bad enough; that our civilisation should be unable to grapple with the terrible problem to which the streets of every town in the kingdom bear witness, is ten times more deplorable; but that any women could be found in the length and breadth of Christendom to argue, on intellectual grounds, calmly and in no sudden gust of passion, in favour of a State-recognised and promiscuous intercourse, is so awful, so hideous a phenomenon of our modernity that the brain reels in contemplating the consequences—even the worldly consequences—of so ghastly and so miserable an error.

Yet it is true. Nor are these things whispered quietly in private rooms behind locked doors. They are proclaimed unblushingly from the housetops, from public platforms, in lecture halls, in books, in papers, in novels written for the purpose, in every way that ingenuity can suggest to reach the mind of the public. Woman must be free—free from the shackles of a misguided past, free from the tyranny of man, free—the horrible blasphemy of it!—from the despotism of God! She must be free to go her own wild road, free to trample in the dust the stainless flower of her own purity, free to fall lower than man himself has fallen and free to drag him down from toiling up those heights which it should be her pride and joy, as it is her God-given mission, to help him to scale.

Man and woman were made to be the com-

plement of each other, and just as man is, on the whole, intellectually and physically the superior, so woman is, morally and spiritually, finer than man. If wilfully and deliberately she flings aside this priceless quality by virtue of which she rules the home and tames the fiercer nature of man, and teaches him to look up with her to higher things, how can she do otherwise than fall far below his own poor level in every respect?

Women who, slandering their own womanhood, preach such doctrines are—I say it deliberately—infinitely worse than the poor Magdalens of the streets. Yet this pernicious, this criminal theory of Free Love has been defended—and by women—on the ground that we should hear no more of women selling their bodies to gain a livelihood, if leasehold unions were recognised by the State and by public opinion as lawful and decent. From the muddle-mindedness, the almost incurable lack of moral perspective revealed by such an argument, one recoils in despair.

Thank God, such views are not common among even the most clamorous of our own advanced countrywomen. But there is on the other hand a tendency which one cannot but deplore, to belittle marriage, to sneer at the home, and to speak slightingly of the household duties in which so many women find the pleasure, as well as the labour, of their lives.

This tendency—not, be it observed, actually connected with ideas of illicit love—is, I fear, spreading amongst those Englishwomen who are not satisfied with their present status. Most of them, I rejoice to admit, would recoil with horror at the suggestion that they advocated Free Love in any shape. Yet I would put this consideration before them. If they are continually accustoming themselves, their readers, their hearers, or their associates, to dwell on the "drudgery" of housewifely duties, to regard the bearing and rearing of children as no fit task for an intellectual woman, and finally, to think and talk of the marriage state as carrying with it some sort of implication of inferiority or slavery for the woman, how long, I ask, will it be before such thoughts insensibly develop into a mental attitude similar to that I have already referred to?

The woman who ceases to look on marriage as a sacrament and the duties it entails as high and holy ones, soon comes to regard it as a mere conventional institution, which may be dispensed with or not, according to the convenience of the man and woman concerned.

This is one terrible danger of the Woman Movement—the precipice towards which women may, all unthinkingly, be going. I do not ask them to become slaves to men, I do not even ask them to forgo their demand for a vote, I do not ask them to abate a single jot of their

legitimate political or social rights: but I do beg them, most seriously and solemnly, to look into their hearts and consider well every step they take towards whatever degree of "freedom" they are aiming at; to hold counsel very earnestly with their consciences, to feel sure that what they are doing is not contrary to the dictates of religion, and finally, to take heed that in the heat and dust and excitement of the conflict they do not lose sight of God's own immutable laws.

If man transgresses, is that a reason for woman also wishing to transgress? Because man is vile, is woman to imitate his vileness? Or shall a woman prove false to her own nature by reason of man's weakness and man's folly? Will she not rather show her superiority and vindicate her claim to be considered the nobler sex by resisting temptation, by helping her fallen brother to regain his manhood, by leading him gently back to the path from which he has strayed? And if, conscious of her own human frailty, she pleads that she cannot, of herself, do these things, then I would ask her to turn for help and strength to One Who has yet never failed any who sought His aid, and to take her example and draw her inspiration from the Divine Man, Jesus Christ Himself, "Whom I have seen, Whom I have loved, in Whom I have believed and in Whom I have delighted."

XXVI

"REDEEM THE TIME"

Life is a matter of work from the very beginning. It started upon that plane from the time of our first parents, and to the end of the world this law of life will be always a law of labour. And this law having been imposed upon man in the beginning, work was looked upon, throughout the ancient world, as a curse. So we read of kings and emperors, rulers of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome conceiving the idea that a life of happiness meant a life of ordering others to work for them, while they themselves indulged in every kind of luxury and amusement, with the result that in the end it came to be thought that only those who could afford to be idle and lead a leisured, self-indulgent life were happy, and that any man who was obliged to work must be miserable.

Then came our divine Lord, the great Master, and it was for Him, Who is not only the holiest of the holy, but the wisest of the wise and the mightiest of the mighty, to choose the best state of life. He chose a life of labour. He came to work with His hands; He laboured

with the sweat falling from His brows; He baptised labour and transformed it from a penalty to a privilege. And since then men have always spoken of the dignity of labour. Christ glorified work, and His Church, following His example, and taking up the tools and implements of service, teaches men to work with their hands and with their minds, to employ themselves in manual and mental labour.

Was it not the Church of Christ that in the Middle Ages organised labour by Christian guilds for the production and promotion of arts and crafts? And throughout those ages, did not the Church stand up as the champion of the working man, the defender of the defenceless? Did she not always and everywhere drive home the lesson that all working men have a right to a living wage, and that slavery and serfdom must be swept away out of the land in which Christ was to rule as Lord and Master? It is the constant teaching of the Church that we are all members of one great social organism, and she unswervingly supports the principle that each should work for the good of the whole.

It is the function of all religion to get this great altruistic principle accepted, and the way to set about it is to see that our own work is done honestly, efficiently, and above all thoroughly. There are many who can claim to be making money, and who are doing well and

getting on in the world's estimation, but how many are there who can truthfully aver that they are "thorough" in all that they undertake? On every rung of the social ladder there are only too many inefficient characters, too readily satisfied with inefficient work. "Efficiency" should be the Englishman's motto in every walk of life and in every department of his country's service. Alas, there has been a plentiful lack of it everywhere, and it has needed a convulsion like the present catastrophic war to shock the country into action.

Egoism is playing havoc with altruism. All are too much like children in a hurry to win the prizes of life, and in the rush for dividends men trample one another down without pity and without remorse. They offer the lame excuse that competition in business is too keen, and the margin of profit too fine, for them to pause and consider what is right and what is wrong, and the consequence is that work is inefficiently done, because done by men inefficient in character.

Thoroughness is the only straight road to the only sort of success worth having. An individual, like a nation, may for a time succeed by trickery and superficiality, but in the long run the man who is thorough in the thing to which he is devoting his energies is the one who will not only come out on top, but who will stay there.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was one day asked by an ambitious young artist the secret of his success. "Thoroughness," was the reply; "I always paint my best."

"Do you know what has led me to success in war?" asked the Napoleon in conversation with his staff. "Attention to details."

There is a time-honoured maxim that what is worth doing is worth doing well. That rule applies to every career and to every action that goes to build it up. Every brick in a building has its right place and its right setting, and the perfect adjustment of the whole can only result from the perfect adjustment of its constituent parts. I once heard of a builder who found fault with a bricklayer for setting bricks too close to one another.

"Jack," said he, "that work won't suit me. Set 'em more free."

"It's the only work that'll suit me," said the bricklayer, and at the end of the week he found himself out of a job. Now he and his employer have changed places. The bricklayer is a well-to-do builder, but his former master is glad of any odd job he can pick up. Depend upon it thoroughness in the long run makes its mark, and pays a good dividend, even though for the moment the showy and superficial workman may seem to prosper better.

It is a thousand pities that this grand principle is not more generally insisted on and

driven home to the rising generation. If every child were made to realise it at school and at home there would not be so many to say later in life, "Honesty is the best policy. I know, for I have tried both." Unfortunately it is a fact that, look where we may, we find evidence all around us of the growing tendency towards lack of thoroughness. Our mahogany is thinly veneered, our cruet-stands lightly plated. Not only are the finest figs at the top of the box, and the biggest strawberries on the surface of the basket, but protestations of honesty are too often found only on the tips of the lips. The man who is "thorough" through and through is becoming a *rara avis*.

More than ever "things are not what they seem." We are given uniforms that will not last, cotton prints that will not hold their colour, patent leathers that crack, umbrellas that gape, and watches that only go when you shake them. But, worse than all, we find a deplorable number of people who are as slack in their work as these objects are useless for their professed purpose, and who are surprised because they do not "get on." The truth is that when experience teaches buyers that there is more slack than cobs in their coal, more paper than leather in their boots, more shoddy than cloth in their coats, they usually change their coal-merchant, bootmaker, or tailor, as the case may be.

When shopkeepers are discovered selling margarine for butter, or the ancient lays of Limerick for new-laid eggs, they are heavily fined, and it would be very serviceable to the public if that system of fining could be applied not only to the false labelling of perishable goods, but also to the inefficient doing of perishable work. It is said of plumbers, in a certain portion of the globe not to be named, that they never do one job without making another. This, no doubt, shows a fine spirit of work, but it is not a practice which should be resorted to without the entire approval of the party who has to pay for it.

What people really appreciate is having some security that they are getting what they pay for. If they pay for a thoroughly good article or thoroughly good work, they expect and want their money's worth. That is a rule which knows no exception. It matters not whether the thing takes the form of groceries, millinery, or medicine, or sweeping or serving, the master or buyer looks to "thoroughness" as a test of efficiency.

Everyone, it is true, cannot work equally well. There are no two hands or heads or faces exactly alike, and so neither are there two workers equally capable, but everyone can, at least, give of his best. We are not all gifted with the cleverness of the American mechanic, who declared he had constructed a scarecrow

which was so effective that it frightened every bird in the district into bringing back every grain of corn stolen thence during the previous year, but we are all clever enough not to steal our employer's time and not to let others steal it. Nor need we undertake any work unless we mean to do it as thoroughly as we can. Not all of us can say with Ruskin: "I never write about anything except what I know more of than most other people," but everyone can and ought to say: "I never set about doing anything except what I can do as well as, or better than, most other people."

It would be well if we took to heart and put into practice the words spoken of Ezechia: "And in every work that he did . . . he did it with all his heart and prospered."

There you have before you the example which merited and won true prosperity. And yet Ezechia had the infamous example of his father, Achaz, before him, and lived his life in an atmosphere laden with the abominations of Oriental idolatry. But instead of yielding to his environment, instead of submitting fatalistically to the influence of his surroundings, he chose to become the architect of circumstances. And so God was with him, and "Ezechia prospered in all his works."

Because you happen to be thrown in the company of men who are not thorough-going, that is no reason why you should take their

arms and share their slipshod ways. Give them a lead. From the experience I have had of successful men in a large commercial city, I am satisfied that most of them have started in the race of life very heavily handicapped. It was by dint of pluck and energy and enterprise—in a word, by their thoroughness—that they mounted step by step the ladder of prosperity. As a rule the man who is born "with a silver spoon in his mouth" trusts too much to the spoon and too little to business, and he often ends by losing both. He pawns the one and ruins the other. Not long ago a millionaire was reminded by an elderly business man that, as an errand boy, his boots used to be cleaned by him.

"Yes," said the man of millions, "and didn't I make them shine?" That was the secret of his success—thoroughness.

It is this thoroughness that England needs so sorely to-day in all her sons, and not in a select few whom we can point to and hold up for admiration to the rest of the world. Thoroughness in religion, thoroughness in work, thoroughness in all things. The greatness of the Empire does not depend on the vastness of its population, or its fabulous wealth, but on this—that its sons be ever upright, honourable, loyal and true. Are not all these qualities included in that word "thorough"?

If her Empire is to stand, England must ask much to-day from all her sons, not only from

those who are more especially dedicated to her service. She needs sons who will be thorough in doing their duty, who will strain like hounds at the leash to get at the work she asks from them. She needs, and never more than to-day, empire supporters as well as empire builders, men whose feet are on the earth, but whose brows touch the stars. She needs citizens on whom she can rely, whom she can trust because they have proved their strength by their thoroughness. She wants no rotters, no loafers, no slackers, no shirkers of work. England wants men who refuse to be beaten, men of grit, men of enthusiasm, without which life is but a poor limp affair.

And what of that greater empire—the empire of God? Whether we like it or not, whether we believe it or not, we are all citizens of that supernatural empire, and it is only by our own act that we can throw away that birthright. As members of a Christian community, it is not for us to shirk the combat. We have to be thorough in this matter as in all others, to try to live up to the spiritual ideal every day and all day, and not pack our religion away in cold storage during the week, to be brought out for an hour or two on Sundays. Cold storage goods lose their flavour and nourishing power.

Be thorough in this business of your spiritual life and you will be thorough in smaller things.

Be true to God in daily life, no matter who else proves false. Beware of a wasted life—wasted hours—wasted opportunities. Think of Dives—think of the careless wedding guest—the idle servant—the foolish virgins, all lost for wasted opportunities. Be thorough. Give God work and He will give you rest. Give God time and He will give you Eternity.

XXVII

THE SELF-CENTRED LIFE

One of the chief characteristics of the present age is its hatred of restriction. People strain at ties which should be held sacred, and break the bonds which should be binding. They make a mockery of the promises of baptism, and shame their marriage vows without a thought. There are many who practically live without principles at all. The whim of the moment, the fancy of the hour, decides their course of action. They live according to fashion. There is no method in their lives, their only aim is to "kill time." Think of it! To kill the golden moments that are slipping by, and bringing Eternity nearer to each one of us.

"Every day that is born into the world," wrote Carlyle, "comes like a burst of music, and rings itself the way through; and you may make it a dance, a dirge, or a life-march, as you will." What a pity that more of us do not strive to make of it a life-march! Yet how many there are who, waking to the sweet dawn, roll over on their pillow and seek the sleep of oblivion, because a longer sleep will help the boring day to pass

more quickly! They waste a precious morning over some scandal in their daily paper, or, with a scrofulous novel in their hands, forget the hour of rising, and stay in bed till noon.

The calls of their household, social and religious duties, are forgotten or ignored, because some passing whim has magnetised them. Night comes and, having managed somehow or other to get through the day, they seek some violent pleasure, some soul-deadening and sense-exciting enjoyment, and so go on killing time till they have killed a glorious Eternity.

There are many so-called men who lead such lives, and there are women, especially women in society—rich, idle, voluptuous—who command what they want by the small exertion of pressing a button. And these men and women might, if they liked, grow into fine, noble, inspiring characters. The thought is enough to make the very angels weep.

"How easy," sighed Becky Sharp, "it is to be good on five thousand a year." And how easy, how fatally easy, it is to be anything but good on the same sum! And why is this? Is it not because self-indulgence takes the place of self-denial?

All classes, I am afraid, share in a degree in this cult of self-indulgence, this horror of discipline. But it is the rich, in particular, I blame. For it is theirs to set an example, to create a fashion which others readily follow. Yet how

many of them, instead of realising their responsibilities in this matter, make it their whole aim to revel in pleasure, like pigs in a sty. They have no thought of anything beyond this present life. They are constantly in search of something to tingle their nervous system, to excite them and take them out of themselves. Even so, they can find no happiness in their pleasure-seeking, oblivion-hunting, weary life. Such people are less happy in reality than the man who keeps his crossing clean, or the woman who goes out charing to keep a roof over her head.

The truth is—and it is well that we should recognise it—that we are living in a world which shirks its obligations, which acknowledges no duties; a world which loves only softness and pleasure. Lapdogs of luxury are everywhere. Immorality is sucking at the heart of England's manhood, and vice is gnawing at the vitals of the nation.

I have said that for this state of things I put the responsibility mainly on the rich, and on those who lead and have it in their power to guide the mass of their fellow countrymen.

How, indeed, can we blame the working classes for not recognising that discipline and self-denial are duties a man owes to himself, his fellows, and his country, when so many examples of slackness and idleness and worse are continually to be seen around him?

It is a common complaint in certain circles

that what we call the lower classes are degenerating, and in particular, that they are given to "aping their betters." For my part, I cannot see what great harm there would be in that, if only these same "betters" would set an example worth following. For in all societies, the majority —such is the weakness of human nature—live according to the fashion set them by those whom circumstances have placed in a position to influence others. It matters not whether the community be, politically speaking, an aristocracy, a plutocracy, or a democracy. The few lead, the many follow.

Unhappily, too, while the open display of luxury and self-indulgence acts like a magnet in attracting weaker spirits, the example of a virtuous life is not so readily followed. Vice lends itself to gossip and smart talk; virtue is voted a boring subject of conversation, and therefore even a comparatively small vicious set has immeasurably greater influence on the more ignorant than the example of many decent-living men can have.

It is then, I repeat, worse than useless to expect self-discipline, self-restraint, self-reverence from the mass of the people in the face of such open scandals as are daily reported by the Press, such scenes of flagitious and riotous living as anyone with eyes to see cannot help witnessing all around him

Nor is it only in great matters that this self-

indulgent spirit is manifested. In every little detail our lives are made smoother and more comfortable. The luxuries of one generation, so we often hear, are the necessities of the next, and material progress naturally accustoms us to a mode of living that our forefathers would have thought incredibly soft and effeminate. But this, so far from being an excuse for still further self-indulgence, should surely brace us up to discipline more firmly our moral fibre. It is nothing against a man that he possesses and uses a motor-car to help him to get through his business and his duties more quickly and effectively. Yet it is undeniable that this invention, admirable if made use of in a proper way, may, like so many other luxuries, become the medium of a soul-stifling self-indulgence that eventually will overpower all the strength of a man's nature, and leave him nothing but a worn-out shell, with all the vitality, the life, the soul of him sucked dry. The very fact that our modern conditions tend to become more comfortable and easy every year should nerve us to exert all our will against this degeneration of soul and body. After all, the Spartans and Stoics of old had a nobler, if still mistaken, ideal than our luxury-loving moderns.

Hard of body, firm of mind and strong of spirit—that is what I would wish every English man to be. And I know of no better way to attain these objects than by fashioning one's life according to the teaching handed down by the

Church through so many centuries. The truly religious man is the man who seeks to fulfil, to the best of his ability, his duties towards God, his neighbour, and himself. And does not the fulfilment of these duties imply an obligation to keep oneself healthy in soul, mind and body, so that one may be at once a useful citizen, a helpful neighbour, and a perfected man? For the moment the Empire is on its feet, braced up, inspired by the Great Peril. May it never relapse, never tire in its pursuit of what is right and just, and in its resolve to be deserving of its Christian heritage.

XXVIII

THE ARRIVAL OF DEMOCRACY

The twentieth century is already well advanced in its teens, and will soon be entering upon its manhood. And, if we are to judge by the signs and portents of the moment, nothing seems more certain than that this century will witness the full assertion of its power by Democracy.

The closing years of the eighteenth century gave birth to that tremendous cataclysm which overthrew for ever the power of the privileged classes who ruled Europe, and was not without its effect even in this country. The nineteenth century, which saw man making such marvellous conquests over nature and such wonderful progress in science, industry and mechanical inventions, saw also a notable change in the political history of this country. To me, at least, the outstanding fact of that century is the picture of the middle class rising in power, asserting its rights, pushing its way to the front, making itself seen and heard and felt, and in turn giving more and more political freedom to the working class, until it is scarcely an exaggeration to say

that this latter now holds in its hands the destinies of the nation.

Democracy, in short, has arrived. It has come like the tide, gradually, quietly, slowly gathering strength, forcing all the barriers that once shut it out, breaking them down and sweeping them away, levelling all things with resistless energy.

Democracy, or the working man, if you like, has come in borne on the strong arm of universal suffrage and universal education. He has come to stay because he has the strength to stay. Applied science has brought him into contact with his fellows throughout the inhabited globe. The working men of the world stand, so to speak, face to face, eye to eye, hand to hand, and with hearts responsive to one another's needs. Electricity, steam and the Press have put them into communication with one another, and they not only know what they want, but they mean, by legitimate ways, to take what they have a right to demand.

Universal suffrage has put into the hands of the working man a weapon which makes him a potent factor in political evolution, and universal education is teaching him how to use that weapon. As we look around, we see our brothers of the wage-earning classes rising up and proclaiming their rights, and the political parties of every creed offering them homage and incense.

The working man is no longer the ignorant labourer of fifty years ago. He reads, and reads intelligently, and now that he has got political freedom he may do great things for this great Empire, if he be not led away by false prophets, and by those who would exploit his inexperience for their own selfish purposes. For Democracy, after all, is entirely inexperienced in the proper exercise of the enormous power which has been placed in its hands. Education may bring knowledge, but it does not necessarily bring wisdom, and it is wisdom of which the working man now stands in such pressing need, when a hundred clamouring voices are calling in his ear, a hundred hands are stretched out to him, and a multitude of counsellors are bidding him confide his destiny to their keeping if he would be prosperous and happy.

It is astonishing from what different standpoints people view Democracy—people, I mean, who believe themselves to be wholly in sympathy with its aspirations and ambitions. I have met men who appear to think that the whole duty of Democracy is to upset the established order of things as quickly as possible ; in other words, to turn the world upside down, so that the poor may become rich and the rich poor. A crack-brained ideal, truly!

Then again there are the anti-religious, or at least anti-Christian, faddists who rejoice to discern in the new force which has arisen, an

ally in their "struggle" against the priest and the Church, and who seem to imagine that Democracy must, by its nature, be synonymous with irreligion.

Of the professional politicians who pay so much lip-homage to the working-classes, I say nothing. Nor is this the place to refer to the Socialists, Syndicalists, Anarchists or other strange wild-fowl of a similar sort, for these folk are not so much admirers of Democracy as would-be leaders and guides to point out to the people the way it should go.

The most curious type of academic Democrats, however, is to be found in that class which protests that Democracy should not be hampered with advice or counsel from any quarter. The working man, so runs this strange theory, has been educated and given the power to make or mar himself and his country. Very well, then, let him work out his own salvation; let him start fresh, and try all things, and learn by bitter experience, if necessary, what is best for him. He will make mistakes, but he will profit by them, and in the end he will gain wisdom as well as knowledge.

Now the fallacy of this remarkable vision of Democracy working out its own salvation must be obvious to anyone who stops for a moment to think out its logical consequences. It assumes that the working classes are to evolve their own theories of life and conduct from nothing, that

the experience of past ages is not to count at all, and that we are to throw away all the good as well as all the bad that we have inherited from our ancestors. In fact, we might as well revert to savagery at once, and painfully hew our way back to civilisation through a tangled jungle wherein all roads and signposts have been overgrown and obliterated.

No, Democracy will not find wisdom by lightly setting aside the experience of mankind, or trusting implicitly to its own newly-won knowledge. For the very reason that it has much to learn, it will be well-advised to go slowly, and ponder well which of the two main roads that stretch before it leads to its true goal.

For, setting aside details, Democracy has in reality only a choice of two paths, and the choice is identically the same as that which confronts every individual soul: the choice between good and evil, between spirituality and worldliness, between Christ and Satan. Democracy is not, in itself, a panacea for all our social troubles; indeed, I will go farther and say that it might, in conceivable circumstances, enormously aggravate them. Nor would it be any consolation, to me at least, to know that while

> "The world lay ruined about our feet
> And the hopes of our youth were dead,"

the catastrophe had come about purely through an error or miscalculation on the part of a

Democracy busily engaged in "working out its own salvation."

I do not anticipate any such catastrophe. I have, I hope, too much trust in the good sense of my countrymen. But what I do wish to emphasise is this: that Democracy is only of value in so far as it realises its responsibilities. To listen to some of the crazy talk indulged in nowadays by professed—or professional—Democrats, one would imagine that the People can do no wrong, and that whatever a majority affirms must be the truth.

No tyrant, possessed of the most absolute power, was ever more flattered or fawned upon than is our Democracy to-day, and the danger is very real lest the working man, his head turned by so much nonsense, should come to believe that he really is above the law, and not only the law of nature and of society, but of God.

There is but one way for Democracy to work out the salvation of its own soul. It needs a leader to guide it, in whom it may place implicit reliance and faith; a standard to fight under, which shall serve as a rallying-post; an ideal to battle for, which shall be capable of drawing it on to higher and ever higher things.

And what more inspiring leader can Democracy find than the Christ Whose voice was ever raised on behalf of the poor and the suffering; what more glorious standard to fight under than

that of the Cross; what finer ideal to strive after than the Christian Ideal as preached nearly two thousand years ago in Galilee?

Whatever social heights Democracy is destined in the future to scale, whatever material wonders it is destined to achieve, whatever political triumphs it is destined to win, if one thing be lacking, if Democracy turns away, as it is in danger of turning away, from Christ and Christianity, it will perish and drag States and Empires down in its fall, as surely as any pagan civilisation of the past has vanished and left nothing but its ruins to record its existence. Our great need is more belief and reliance on Christ, our Lord. A present-day writer, reviewing the state of Europe to-day, is not afraid to say, "The situation in Europe drives home the question whether a whole-hearted acceptance of Christ's teaching is not the only sound basis on which Society can be built." I ask with the blessed apostle, "To whom else shall we go?"

XXIX

SOCIAL REFORM AND INDIVIDUAL REFORM

It is a curious instance of the muddle-headedness of modern thinkers that Christ is now actually claimed by many as the great pioneer, the first teacher of Socialism. As a matter of strict fact, He was not even directly a social reformer. His mission was a spiritual one, and He was, in every sense of the word, not a political, but a religious reformer.

It is true that, indirectly, He inspired many social and domestic reforms. Lately we have been told by those who know, by a great Commission that has done a great work, that at root the social problems resolve themselves into moral problems, and that, until you lay hold of the moral problem, until you shake the social question down to the moral basis, you are merely tinkering with social reform at the top.

Our Lord taught man to reform himself, and when man has reformed himself he will soon reform his environment, he will soon reform his domestic and social relations, he will soon assert his moral fibre. He will reform his home ;

and when you have multiplied the reformation of homes, you will have a reformed society.

Let us build up, by all means, our Empire—no one prouder of it than he who writes these words—but do not let us cheat ourselves with the idea that the Empire or the country can rest secure on our Navy, our Army, and our Kitchener's men alone. These things we must have, but they will soon cease to be worth much to us unless we make up our minds to reform our homes. What a haven of refuge is a real Christian home, what a shelter from the storms of heresy, the cold blasts of Agnosticism, the frozen avalanches of Indifferentism! It is in the home that the nation finds its strength, that the ultimate foundations of Empire must rest. If our homes are godless, how shall we train the future citizens of our Empire to be worthy of their heritage?

Let us not talk, then, too much or too boastfully about social reform. It is individual reform, home reform that we need. When that has been accomplished, the wider results will follow of themselves.

Take the question of environment. It is not to be denied, as I have had occasion to observe elsewhere, that environment has a very important bearing upon character, and it is a problem that must be dealt with wholesale in the near future. But we must be on our guard against exaggerating the effects of environment

and against imagining that, by changing a man's surroundings, we can, by that means alone, change his character.

There are other things to be thought of; and first and foremost, as I have said, we must reform ourselves. Nothing can well be more ridiculous than a consciously superior person talking of social reform, as though the whole point at issue were the better housing of the poor. By a strange impertinence, these people assume that, having got their poor into dwellings more worthy of human beings, the whole moral tone of the State will thereby suddenly be changed.

They appear to be labouring under the odd delusion that by readjusting the environment and ameliorating the condition of their less fortunate brothers and sisters they are going to reform these poorer brethren. Never was there a more shameful or preposterous mistake. Social reform is all very well in its way, but England stands in need to-day of individual reform, and both must be founded on the Christian ideal.

It is only when we have set our own private house in order that we can, with any effect, try to help our neighbour to do the same for his. We want to see a reformed society, a moral state, a happy community. Is it not, then, reasonable that we should start on this quest at the nearest point, and, having ourselves made up our minds to lead a better, a more Christian

life, then go about doing good, offering personal service instead of joining Leagues and promoting dubious Bills?

It is disturbing to think, amid all the present day gush about Social Reform, how much less real brotherhood exists between man and man to-day, how impersonal our relations are becoming one with another. It is a grievous thing that in every review or paper where such matters are discussed, it is always a question of capital versus labour, the leisured classes versus the wage-earning classes, the idle rich and the deserving poor, or the shiftless poor and the charitable rich. Why should there be this antagonism between any section of the whole community? Is it not because we have accustomed ourselves to think of our fellow creatures in the mass, rather than as individuals, that we have refused to follow the example of Christ, and that our own relations with others are a matter of business rather than of humanity? There would be very little need of social reform if we took our religion seriously, and made an honest endeavour to put a few of Christ's precepts into practice.

Go about the world and do good. Go and visit the sick, yourself, go and inquire how the poor live, not at secondhand, not for the sake of experience, but that you may bring them comfort and help. Go out, I say, and do good. You can do it with a word, you can do it with

a smile, you can do it with a look, with a shake of the hand, with a letter, with a visit. Don't stop to think whether your neighbour is similarly occupied. Start in yourself on the good work, and you will be surprised to find how much you can accomplish single-handed.

What a good place the world would be to live in if we were all of this mind! How much more human we should become if we let our sympathies have their way instead of stifling them! Dare, then, to be human, dare to be manly, dare to be Christian, and do not be always catering for your passions. They have fed quite well enough.

"Oh, but," the Socialist will say, "my dear Father, truly, you are stealing my thunder. This is my own conception of the world—the world as it will be when we are all Socialists and have got rid of all our present troubles, Capitalism, Feudalism and, above all, the deadening superstitions of Christianity."

Well, I suppose the Socialist is at liberty to make that assertion, at liberty in the legal sense, I mean. But how does he suppose his nostrum is going to cure the ills of civilisation when it is founded on the very negation of humanity? Where, in a Socialistic State, will there be room for that personal service which it should be the delight of every Christian to render to his brother? The poor, I think, have had already such experience of how a soulless Board can

treat them as will not render them too anxious to be given over wholly, in all the actions of their daily lives, to its tender mercies.

The more moderate Social Reformer has more reason on his side. But I would beg even him to remember that social reform without a moral or religious basis is worth nothing, that to house the poor better may only be to transfer them from one evil environment to another just as bad for their morals.

Let us have reform by all means, but let us understand what social reform really means, what it should include, and what it shall not include. The Christian who is honestly trying to follow His great Example will have no difficulty in discerning the right path, no matter how other men are led astray in mists and bogs by the enticing will-o'-the-wisps and mocking illusions of a materialistic millennium. "If thou wilt enter into life"; "if thou wilt come after Me"; "if thou wilt be perfect"—these are the searching texts first of all to worry into the fibre of our being.

XXX

THE SWEATING CURSE

I WAS once asked for my views on sweating, and I remember replying that I might just as well have been asked my opinion about slavery or murder. The sweating system should never have been allowed to come into existence at all; yet come it did in the early part of the last century. Consequently, it is nearly a hundred years too old, and is quite ready for death and burial. Let it die, then, and let us give it a pauper's funeral with the epitaph:

"He was only a sweater whom nobody mourns."

I, for one, would rejoice more than I can say to chronicle the disappearance of this slave-driving, sweating business. Instead of being allowed to starve its victims out of life, it should itself have been starved to death in its infancy. An attempt, I admit, to do this was made in 1850, and again in 1876, while in 1888 a select committee of the House of Lords was appointed to inquire into the matter, 291 sweated witnesses being examined. Some of us then hoped that the inquiry would result in the extinction of this British vampire,

which was draining away the life-blood of our defenceless brothers and sisters. But we were beaten, and the sweater triumphed all along the line. How could it be otherwise, when the sweater has no conscience to shame him into penitence, when his ears are as deaf to the cries of his victims as his eyes are blind to their unutterable misery? The greed for gain is the only feeling left in his atrophied soul, and the groans of his fellow-creatures are only listened to by him if he can coin them into gold.

What do we mean exactly by sweating? A Parliamentary Committee has described the system as

(1) Unduly low rates of wages.
(2) Excessive hours of work.
(3) Insanitary conditions of the workplaces.

I do not think that the vast majority of the community can have any idea of the sweating practices that obtain in their midst in London, in Liverpool, and in Manchester, in Leicester and Bristol, in Birmingham and other centres of industry, and that are even being carried on in connection with the supplies of uniforms and equipment for our soldiers. It is the business of those of us who know to enlighten them on the subject, and to keep hammering away at it until we succeed in waking them up, and getting something done.

There are good and worthy people who are

so horrified at uncomfortable revelations of this sort, that as soon as anyone interested, for reasons of his own, in continuing this detestable traffic, protests that the agitation has been exaggerated, they will gladly accept his word, and sink back into their comfortable chairs with profound relief, and a thankful ejaculation that "I always thought things couldn't be so bad as they were made out. It wouldn't be allowed in this country."

Let me tell you that it is allowed, and far worse things than you have heard of are allowed in this Christian England, in this civilised twentieth century. There has been no exaggeration, because no exaggeration is possible.

Let me illustrate what I mean by giving a single instance—a typical one. I take it from Birmingham, which proudly claims to be the ideal municipality. Few persons realise that in the metropolis of the Midlands there are, or were, when I got my information, fifty button factories and, if I mistake not, twelve other factories for hooks and eyes. These buttons and hooks and eyes, when made, are usually mounted on cards, ready for the inspection of shopkeepers' customers.

Little do the purchasers imagine that some ten thousand of the poorest of our poor brothers and sisters are engaged the livelong day in hovels called houses, sewing, among other things, these hooks and eyes upon show cards. Still less do they realise that 288 hooks and 288 eyes have

to be linked together and stitched to a card for the magnificent remuneration of four farthings!

When the sweated worker has carded a "pack" she may claim as her wages ninepence. But out of this ninepence the cost of needles and cotton must be subtracted, which, "carders" tell me, amounts to one penny in the shilling. Working all day a woman may earn at this job nearly three farthings an hour, which totals on an average about three and threepence a week! You who sing in England "Britons never shall be slaves," think of your sisters carding hooks and eyes in such poverty, hunger and misery.

Let me emphasise the case in hand a little more. In a squalid court I found a woman, with her four children, sitting on the floor of a fireless room, working in silence. The ages of the children ranged from eight down to two and a half years old. All the little brood—God bless them!—were linking the hooks and the eyes with which the floor was littered, preparing them for the mother's carding-needle. From 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., or it may be to midnight, with necessary interruptions only, the whole family sat working, including even the husband, who was out of employment. What do you suppose were the earnings of this industrious family? Five shillings a week! and out of this sum half a crown had to go to the rackrenter. So that for fire, for light, for food and for clothing, there remained the other half a crown.

"O God! that rent should be so dear
And flesh and blood so cheap."

Is there not something rotten in Christian England somewhere, when such a state of things can continue unchecked? Children dragged up in hovels such as I have described do not know the meaning of a hearty meal, or a jolly game, or a merry laugh. They are born hungry, tired and weeping.

I have cited a sweating instance from Birmingham. I could fill a whole volume with worse cases from Manchester, where I worked for nearly twenty years, or the East End of London, where I had impressed upon me examples of the sweating industry which can never fade from my memory, but which I dare not commit to print. But if you will multiply that single example I have given from Birmingham by some hundreds of thousands, you will begin to appreciate the meaning of that text of Scripture "Blessed is the man who understandeth concerning the needy and the poor."

Instead of boasting that trade is booming, and that our national prosperity stands so high, better far would it be for us to hang our heads and strike our breasts, confessing that pauperism is increasing, that it has reached 46 per thousand in London, and proclaiming to our shame that the ragged army under the sweaters is being daily recruited far more readily than the regular army of the King. Do not be easily taken in

by imposing figures on balance-sheets. Turn your thoughts instead to this war-scourge, under which the Empire is groaning for its sins.

To make matters worse for industrial workers, undesirable aliens, so-called "political refugees," are swarming in upon us like a plague of locusts, seizing upon work which ought to be kept for our own people, and lowering the standard of living to a point to which none of our own race could fall without sinking into the grave itself. If our representatives, who are so considerate to aliens, would visit the East End, they would find that in the borough of Stepney alone 107 streets have passed into the occupation of aliens. That ought to satisfy them! Each time I visit the district I seem to learn that more and more of my fellow-countrymen have been turned out of doors to make room for yet another importation of aliens. My complaint is not against the Russian Jew, or whoever the alien happens to be, but against our legislators who practically evict our own people to make room for the immigrant. It is all very well to be magnanimous at the expense of others. I should like our legislators to be magnanimous at their own expense, and not at the cost of home and work to our wage-earning brethren.

Of course, there is an Aliens Act, but the foreigner is far too clever to be thwarted by it.

He must bring a five-pound note of course. That same five-pound note is a season ticket and is the passport for scores of undesirables.

Meanwhile, is it not a terrible, a shocking, a humiliating thing that in the twentieth century a system should be allowed to continue which, if it means anything, means the sapping of the energies and of the vitality of the whole community?

If a nation's efficiency depends upon the efficiency of its industries, it is equally clear that the efficiency of its industries depends no less upon the efficiency of its industrial workers. To defraud the labourer of a sustenance wage is, to my thinking, the crime of national suicide. It is a crime against the country, it is a crime against the worker, it is a crime crying to Heaven for vengeance, which no Christian nation ought to tolerate within its borders. If the wage-earning citizen has duties, he has rights no less, the first among them being the right in a Christian State to live a human and Christian existence.

Proclaim, if you will, that England expects every man to do his duty, but, lest you forget, let me remind you that, on the other hand, every man expects England to do *her* duty. What has she done; what is she doing; what is she going to do? Wake up, England, and hear God's present commentary on your past!

XXXI

CAPITAL AND LABOUR

Not so very many years ago, a strike of working men on any extended scale invariably shocked the respectable but somewhat lethargic mind of the British public. They seldom troubled to inquire very deeply into the causes of the dispute, but in a general way they vaguely assumed that the working classes were trying to get more than they deserved or than was good for them, and set about wringing their hands helplessly and wondering what the world was coming to. Sometimes one heard the opinion expressed that strikes were only a passing phase, due to a particular local or temporary cause, and that it was quite absurd to suppose that they would recur during a time of real trade prosperity. Besides, Parliament was legislating as fast as it could to remove any legitimate grievances the lower classes might be suffering under, and so there was, on the whole, a comfortable feeling that things would settle down quietly again and the industrial methods of the latter part of the nineteenth century be allowed to continue undisturbed.

But strikes, so far from diminishing, have of late years considerably increased both in number and in magnitude, and this, too, at a time when a tremendous trade boom has been in progress. And at last the public have been forced to realise that, however uncomfortable a strike may be for themselves, it is a weapon which the working man has made up his mind to use, not only to adjust some special or individual grievance, but with the object of maintaining certain well-defined principles which he has laid down for himself, and, above all, with the fixed notion of bettering his own and his fellows' condition generally. Whether it affects our own pockets or not, or even though it may offend our own sense of decency or decorum, we have to face the fact that the strike is now a recognised means of enabling Labour to stand up for its rights against what it may consider the encroachments of Capital.

And strikes have, at any rate, produced one excellent result, in that modern society recognises that the labouring classes are entitled to consideration, and though at times they may be inclined to push their demands too far, we have at any rate got right away from the nineteenth century view of treating Labour as a commodity in itself and of ignoring entirely its human aspect.

Even now, however, I do not think the general public regard this grave question in

the proper perspective. So far as my own experience goes, I find people are apt to look on a strike as still something in the nature of a sporadic phenomenon, uncomfortable for the moment, but usually to be settled by some more or less satisfactory compromise, which will keep things going fairly well until some fresh point of disagreement is reached.

As a matter of fact, it does not require a very deep examination of the whole subject to arrive at the conclusion that a strike is not, as some people seem to think, an isolated illness which can be cured by a particular agreement on certain points, but is rather a symptom of the deep-seated disease which is eating into the vitals of the whole social body.

Now we have advanced so far in our efforts to diagnose this disease as to arrive at a pretty general agreement that the first charge on any industry must be a living wage for the workers, the actual producers without whose co-operation Capital is helpless. The economic theories of the Manchester School, which limited its outlook to the question of supply and demand, and which made no distinction between machinery and flesh and blood, are, for all practical purposes, discredited, though I wish I could think that the more humane view prevailing to-day had been voluntarily adopted by the Capitalists, rather than forced upon them by outside circumstances.

There have always been, I am thankful to

know, employers who have done their duty by their employees, and these, few though they may have been, comparatively speaking, have invariably found their policy pay them well, even from the purely commercial point of view. Which brings me to the discussion of what, I think, would prove a real solution of most of the industrial troubles that beset us at present, and do away with nearly all the antagonism between Capital and Labour.

What we have got to realise is that no amount of legislation, however well-intended and even actually beneficial, and that no amount of long-winded discussions concerning the economic rights of one side or the other, will avail to remove that antagonism. In proportion as one party is forced to yield to the other, so will the feelings of bitterness and injustice, with all that they imply in the matter of setting class against class, grow stronger and more ineradicable, and the consequence may be an upheaval that may destroy the whole of our Christian civilisation.

It is for the employers to make the first move. The present soulless relations between the capitalist and the wage-earner have got to be put on an altogether different footing. The worker must be able to regard the business in which he is employed, not as a mere institution from which he draws so many shillings weekly, but as a concern in whose prosperity he is vitally interested, and on whose success his own depends.

Every employer of labour, then, with a wider outlook than mere dividend-grabbing, will make a point of introducing into his business some such human element as co-partnership or profit-sharing, which will give his workers a direct and personal interest in the industry in which they are engaged. I rejoice to know that in many of our business houses some such scheme is already operating with quite extraordinary success. I know of firms which distribute at Christmas time two, three, or even four thousand pounds as a bonus on the results of the year's working. This method of dealing with the wage-earners changes a business from being merely a piece of elaborate mechanism into a human organism. The men and women in such a firm, store or shop, become, as it were, members of one family, taking a very personal interest in the success of a business in which they are something more than mere "hands" under a "boss."

And not only is the staff of employees benefited by the conversion of a business from a grinding machine into a human organisation, but the employer himself is saved inconceivable anxiety about his relations with his men, and he is able to move among them in the different departments of his business, feeling that his presence means to them a sympathetic encouragement and a friendly recognition of their devoted services.

It is this human element, more than anything else, which is going to put an end to strikes and to save us in the future from the quicksands of Socialistic and Syndicalistic theories. While I was in the States I saw this personal relationship between master and man highly developed in not a few department stores and other business establishments; but I want particularly to emphasise the fact that the mere adoption of co-operative or profit-sharing methods will not, in itself, necessarily abolish all trouble between employers and employed.

It will do a great deal, beyond a doubt, to rid us of much of the existing class antagonism, but we want something more than this. We want to get closer together, to strive to work for the common good, each for all and all for each, and to realise, to the greatest possible extent, the Christian ideal of the brotherhood of men under the fatherhood of God.

It is a big ideal, and I do not say that our erring human nature will ever be able to realise it in its full meaning, but at least it is an ideal worth struggling for, and to no relation of life, as it seems to me, is it more easy to apply than to that between employer and employed. Self-interest alone should be a sufficient inducement for any firm to make their employees contented, happy and prosperous, but self-interest as a motive will never get the best results. The element of real humanity, of a

brotherly interest, must be added if the result is to be successful, and in this connection much can be done, and, I am thankful to recognise, much is being done in many quarters in what may be called social welfare work.

By looking after, and taking a lively personal interest in, the outside recreations and pursuits of his employees, the head of a firm may do a great deal to foster the intimate personal note in the business. But here, again, tact is specially needed. Employees must not be made to feel that they are bound to enjoy themselves or mould their own lives in a way which a benevolent, but, perhaps, rather too autocratic, employer commands. I have heard of cases in which, doubtless with the most laudable motives, the lives of employees have been made almost unbearable owing to the strict supervision to which they were subjected in the matter of recreation and amusement. And the result was that there was far more ill-feeling between the workers and the masters than would have been the case had the latter left the men more to their own devices. No Englishman likes to be driven. If he is treated well, he will work well, but he will not submit to being dictated to as to how he shall use the hours which are his own. And this, I think, is a point that should be borne in mind by many well-meaning employers, who think they are doing so much for their men and who are honestly hurt and be-

wildered by the cold way in which their efforts are received.

But these pitfalls can easily be avoided, and the chief point is that the means employed to improve the relationship between masters and men shall be adapted to the end. Whatever technical or theoretical difficulties are supposed to exist in the adoption of profit-sharing schemes can always be overcome in practice, as has been abundantly proved, and for the rest, as I say, it is largely a question of tact and good-will. Let employers provide all the social amenities possible for their employees, but let it be entirely a matter for the employee's own choice whether he takes advantage of them.

Looking out upon the commercial and industrial side of life, it is possible to see, in the near future, almost unlimited opportunities for expansion. Business is becoming a fine art, and anyone who has studied the subject will soon be satisfied that there is no end to be set to its sphere of activity and enterprise. There is money in it, there are brains in it, there is education in it, there is recreation in it. And once the wage-earner is made to understand and realise that his own opportunities are as unlimited as those of the man at the top, his point of view will speedily be altered. And I would remind the employer that, apart from the increased success which the increased efficiency of his

employees will bring him, he will get an enormous return in other ways under the altered industrial conditions. There is no greater consolation to be got out of life than the joy of helping others.

XXXII

MODERN IDEALS

I.—Reversion to Paganism

Christians can have but one ideal, one true measure of greatness. It is the measure given to us, taught to us, revealed to us by the Founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ. Before the principles of the great Liberator became dominant in human affairs, there were, roughly speaking, three measures of greatness prevalent in the world: that of the Barbarian, that of the Greek, and that of the Roman; and even to-day, wherever we find a people not recognising the standard of Christ, one or other of these three pagan measures still obtains.

The savage and barbarian in all times has but one ideal of greatness, which is brute force. He measures greatness by the number of scalps, by the amount of looted plunder he has collected, by his herds of cattle, by his empire over the lives of others. Alaric, Attila, Tamerlane—such are the ideals of greatness in the mind of the barbarian. A miserable standard it is, for a drop of poison, an inch of steel, a few infinitesimal microbes

may in a moment bring to nothing such greatness as that.

The refined and polished Athenian had quite another standard of greatness: his was an intellectual and æsthetic standard. He lived chiefly in the open air, or about the precincts of a great temple. He spent his days in the study of art, or hung upon the eloquent words of an Æschines or a Demosthenes, or paced up and down listening to the philosophy of an Aristotle or a Plato. He worshipped intellect, art and eloquence.

The Roman ideal was political strength and imperial dominion. To the Romans the highest type of the great man was to be found in the conqueror of nations, the master of many legions, the sagacious ruler, and it was Rome's proudest boast that she was not only mistress of the world, but that she was able, by her unrivalled instinct for governing, to retain, with no effort, the allegiance of the countries she had added to her Empire.

Yet surely man was born for something better and nobler than these ideals of greatness—brute force, mental power, political energy! We may endow a man with the physique of Hercules, the eloquence of Demosthenes, and the statecraft of Cæsar; but unless he has that within him which teaches him to do all that becomes a man, he will degenerate into a selfish tyrant. Physical energy, mental ability,

and political astuteness were united in the highest degree in Napoleon. Yet he ended by arriving at such a pitch of egoism that, as he himself is reported to have said, the lives of millions of men counted as nothing to him when his interests were at stake.

What is the Christian standard of greatness? It seems strange that, in an avowedly Christian country, one should have to recall the words of Christ, Who, when His Apostles were disputing among themselves as to which should be the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven, stopped their strife with those memorable words: "Whosoever shall be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

There, in a phrase, is the difference between the world's standard of judgment and the Divine conception of human greatness. And Christ's estimate of greatness differs from all others principally in this, that, according to it, greatness is not to be the monopoly of a privileged class or the title given to certain exceptional forms of service. It is to be common to every section of the community, it is to consist, not in the importance of the act performed, but in the motive which is behind the action.

A humble man may carry out an obscure task in the course of his labour, from such principles and in such a manner as to render it truly great. The greatness which Christ recog-

nises is possible to every individual member of the social organism by the due performance of his functions of usefulness, whatever they may be; by his exchanging egoism for altruism, by his suppression of himself, his giving up of himself for others.

In short, Christ taught that the quality of an act did not lie in its intrinsic importance, but in the fashion and the spirit in which it was done.

It is pertinent, then, to inquire how far, in this age, we have departed from the Christian ideal, and to what extent we still cling to the barbarian and pagan measures of greatness. Human nature being what it is, it is not to be expected that we shall cease, even in the course of centuries, from acclaiming the man pre-eminent in certain walks of life, and ignoring or even despising other occupations as contemptible or degrading.

But it seems to me that, just at present, there are specially disturbing signs that public opinion is being subtly educated not only to admire and copy, so far as it can, the example of the so-called successful men of the world, but also to set up deliberately, in place of the Christian ideal, those other standards of which I have spoken.

It is the fashion nowadays to decry work as work. Work, by all means, you will be told, work hard and work in a hurry, but only as a means to an end, the end being that you may the sooner be able to lead a life of self-indulg-

ence and luxury. It is absurd to take a pride in one's work—we must work for gain, so that we may the sooner be rid of the necessity for work, or only go on working to add more money to that we have already earned.

A man must work, it is admitted, whether to live or to make money, but, for all that, the notion that there is anything honourable or dignified in the actual work itself is sedulously discouraged. Indeed, the notion is steadily fostered that good honest work is not wanted nowadays, or rather that the capacity for work is nothing like so excellent a possession as the mental agility which, at a moment's notice, can bring forth "ideas" readily convertible into hard cash.

I am not saying that there are no hard or honest workers in the world. There are plenty of them. But the trouble is that they are gradually being pushed into an inferior position as compared with that "brainy," smart young person, for whom there seems such a constant demand at the present time. And what, may I ask, is the consequence of such a continual depreciation of the honest worker likely to be? Surely the youth about to enter upon his struggle with the world will elect to join the ranks, not of the workers, but of the "brainy" band, and make up in push and cheek what he lacks in marketable ideas. So that, even from a worldly point of view, the country will be a loser.

I have, I fear, been tempted into an apparent digression on this subject of work, but it is, in reality, germane to my subject, for it is in the attitude adopted towards the every-day task that the ideals of Christianity and the modern spirit are so appallingly at variance. To the former there can be no such thing as menial employment; all labour, if worthily done, is worthy of the best energies of a man or woman. But a generation, fed on the noxious heresies of an irreligious and worldly philosophy, is rapidly arriving at the conclusion that the ordinary tasks of daily life are not worthy its exalted attention—that it cannot, in short, sufficiently "express" its own wonderful self through such a paltry medium. So far astray does the deliberate turning aside from Christianity lead the deluded human mind! Believe me, if I were to keep a London street crossing, there would be this remarkable about it—that it would be the best kept crossing in the whole metropolis. Be proud of your work, no matter how humble it is.

II.—"Making a Success"

But I still have something to say concerning the three ideals already referred to. As ideals, they are manifestly worthless, though in their proper place they may be, each and all, worthy of respect and even admiration.

It is a good thing for youth to take care of

its physical body, and to keep it healthy and strong by means of proper exercise and moderation. Intellect, art and eloquence, again, are good things in their way, and it is fit that we should pay due consideration to them. Similarly the man who has attained to political power and uses it wisely and well, is justly entitled to our admiration and respect.

But how stands the matter as regards these things to-day?

The Christian ideal, as I have shown, is no longer that obtaining in this country. We have gone back for our standards to the pagans and the savages. And if there is a great deal that is to be commended in the physical culture craze of which we hear so much nowadays, there is also grave danger of the cult being overdone. By all means be careful about your health, but do not erect your body into a god, and neglect the higher side of your nature in anxiously cultivating your biceps, and in studying the intricate question of pose and poise, bearing and balance. Lead a healthy, regular life, and you may safely trust Nature to repay you in that respect.

It may seem strange that immediately after warning my readers against paying overmuch attention to their bodies, I should find myself compelled to caution them against the equally pressing and even more insidious danger of making a fetish of the intellect. But it is a fact that this curious age, with all its hunger

for luxury, its craving for pleasure, has, in some odd, paradoxical fancy, begun to take itself seriously. Having discarded the old teachings of Christianity, it has started to "think for itself," and the results might be amusing were they not too distressing to furnish food for laughter.

Just as in Athens of old the people were ever attracted by some new thing, so, in our own day, a preacher or a teacher has but to enunciate some fresh philosophy, some novel doctrine, to attract a goodly crowd of followers, who imagine that by accepting his brand-new gospel they are showing a fine independence of thought, and proving themselves superior to the common herd.

Well, an original thinker must always command our respect and engage our interest, even if we consider him mistaken, but the hashed-up heresies of the past, which nowadays affect to take the place of religion, are so obviously far from being original, that they could only deceive those who play at thinking as children make-believe with toys.

There is, again, that third ideal which I mentioned—the Roman ideal of imperial strength and dominion. Such an ideal must make the strongest possible appeal to every Englishman, to every British subject. Let us be patriotic by all means, but it is also necessary to be on our guard against dwelling too much on the

material benefits of Empire. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" And what shall it profit a nation—how did it profit Rome?—to conquer the whole world merely for its own selfish ends, and to satisfy its own greed and lust for power? Heaven forbid that I should bring such an accusation as that against my own beloved country; but I would remind my readers that to rule others wisely, it is necessary to rule oneself, and never more so than at a time like the present. There, for the moment, let the matter rest.

I have spoken of these three ideals, and I have frankly admitted that there is good in each, if kept within bounds. But there is another ideal—if we can call it such—which is, I fear, making very rapid headway in England just now. It is, in the phrase of the day, "to make a success," and since it is clearly our duty to make the most of such talents as we have been given, such an ambition would seem at first sight innocent and even laudable.

Everything depends, however, on what meaning we attach to the word "success." No Christian who really considered his religion of vital importance could possibly, at the end of life, regard his career as a success, however high he had risen in the world's estimation, if he had not satisfied his own conscience and kept faith with his Creator.

I am not saying a word against legitimate

ambitions. On the contrary, since power, riches and position increase a man's ability to do good and help others, we should each strive, so far as in us lies, to attain to such a position as will enable us to get what we can in order that we may give the more freely. We cannot go wrong if we keep in mind the Christian measure of greatness of which I have spoken—"to minister to all men."

But can we say of this generation that its objects are thus laudable? Can we even award it the negative praise of pursuing an artistic or business ideal for the satisfaction of knowing that the work in hand has been well and truly done, irrespective of the wealth it may bring? We can appreciate, even if we cannot approve, the man who cares nothing for money, who, let us say, for the sake of his art, flouts the world and its riches, and is content to eat the bread of poverty, so long as he feels he is not bartering his talents. No doubt at bottom his motives will be found to rest on much vanity and egoism. But at least he follows a worthier ideal than most of us can boast we do to-day.

For the fact is—and it is absurd to deny it—that in this material, sensual age, by "success" we mean "money." Let a man make money, and there will be few to ask how he made it; fewer still to inquire whether he uses it well. And, to speak candidly, the whole aim of our modern money-seekers seems to be that

they may use their riches, when acquired, to indulge themselves in every kind of luxury and pleasure. There are many men I have met who have achieved this kind of success, and, since they are not notorious evil-livers, they would probably be very genuinely astonished if told that, from the Christian point of view, they were failures.

Such men have not, I maintain, used their talents rightly. Having satisfied all their personal desires in the way of luxury and enjoyment, they find it possible to devote a certain sum yearly to charity; they may even become patrons of various charitable organisations, but it never occurs to them that they are called upon to do more than this. And why? Because they live, I do not say in an anti-Christian, but most decidedly in an un-Christian atmosphere, in an age when the teachings of Christ are not so much opposed, as ignored. And I say explicitly, there is more danger to the world's morality to be apprehended from this indifferent, practically pagan, attitude, than from the bitter hostility which at various times in history infidels and atheists have shown to the Christian spirit.

For while these latter had their time too fully occupied in attacking the Church to stop to inquire what they were going to put in her place, the modern pagan is a constructive builder of evil. He insists that an act, a rule of con-

duct, a mode of life, which by every law of God is wrong, is to be considered right, that evil is good and vice virtue, and finds in a dozen other horrible paradoxes the sole repository of truth where morality and ethics are concerned.

In fact, he will not have the spirit of Christ on any consideration. Sooner than that, he will return to the old pagan standards, the morality, the ideals of pagan Greece and Rome, or even the deceptive philosophies of the East. And the result is, as all such turning away from the Divine must be, the growth of a more debased, if more subtle, type of materialism than any pagan philosopher ever imagined or any heathen voluptuary ever practised. We can never be as though the Cross in the heavens had not once shone out before us.

XXXIII

THE USES OF ADVERTISEMENT

Some superior-minded folk have got into the habit of unthinkingly condemning the extent to which the art of advertisement is used nowadays. And on the surface there is some slight plausibility for their attitude. They point out that advertisement of itself by no means guarantees the goodness of the thing advertised, that indeed an inferior article well boomed—if I may be allowed the expression—is more likely to be bought by an ignorant public than the genuine goods which are sold on their merits alone, and that this very fact tends to lessen the general power of discrimination, and leads both to the neglect of what is really valuable in great and small matters and to the undue exaltation of the lower at the expense of the higher.

Such people, it will be noticed, are not referring to the uses of advertisement in connection with commerce alone; rightly or wrongly, this practice of advertising what one has to offer to the world now permeates every department of human activity, and that in a very

extraordinary degree. And the question arises whether on the whole the effects on mankind generally are quite so injurious as the anti-advertisers would have us believe.

For my part, I am heart and soul with the advertisers, and I can give the reasons for my position in a very few words. In the first place, advertisement is no new thing. Every generation, back to the remotest ages, has made use of the art, according to its lights and in its own way. If the advertising of our own times is a little more pronounced—a little more blatant, if you like—that is readily explained by the fact that with the comparative growth of the civilised world it has become necessary to raise one's voice a little louder than was needful in the past. The necessity may be deplored, but it is no use kicking against accomplished facts.

Secondly, my experience goes to show that no amount of advertisement will sell a really bad article for any length of time. You may fool the people to start with, but you cannot fool them for ever. And thirdly, I am myself inartistic enough to believe that if you have something to offer mankind, whether in trade, art, or morality, which will benefit your fellow-creatures, you have every right to use all legitimate means to make them appreciate that fact. In certain cases I would even go farther and insist that it is your duty to do so.

But that is a point which I will deal with directly.

I have referred to advertisement as an art. It is also a science. It is a science inasmuch as it implies a thorough study of psychology. We want to know what men want. We have to sit down and study human nature in all its moods and tenses and on every rung of the social ladder. We must know what is doing and how it is being done, and we have got to be actual and supply pressing immediate wants.

It is an art because artists have strong motives for employing their best skill in this matter of advertising. If I were asked to define it, I would say it was the art of arresting attention, and telling men where best to get what most they want. I do not say that advertising is free from abuse. Cheap and nasty things which nobody needs are forced upon our attention unblushingly and boldly. But what good thing is there in the world which is not equally misused? The honest advertiser of an honest article has my approbation all the time, and the attitude of those who condemn him is little short of hypocritical.

But while I thoroughly believe in advertisement, I would at the same time offer a word of warning to advertisers—and since we may all, in one form or another, be included under that designation, my warning is addressed to every-

body. In advertising, you must strike the right note and get hold of the right thing to advertise. Your article must be what it professes to be, and it must be something that mankind ought to need. And this brings me to my main point.

The superior-minded people I have already referred to object to modern methods of advertisement chiefly, I gather, on artistic grounds. But there is a certain class of goods—I speak with all reverence—the advertising of which they oppose, curiously enough, from an ethical standpoint. "If you choose to annoy your fellows," they say in effect, "by shouting in their ears, at least confine your vulgar methods to vulgar things. It is undignified and irreverent, if not actually blasphemous, to introduce advertisement into matters about which most people preserve a becoming reticence, to strain your voice in the effort to attract attention to your religious wares and to turn the House of God into a sort of theatre."

I pass by for the moment the point that people who talk like this do not show themselves, as a rule, so very careful in other respects of the Divine dignity or the reverence due to the Creator. But I should very much like to know why the subject of religion should be the only one tabooed in the modern world. I quite agree that, under present conditions, the man who introduces this topic in mixed

society is generally held to have committed a blunder. And certainly no thinking man, however religious he may be, would expect to accomplish any good by standing up in a drawing-room and exhorting the assembled company to eschew their frivolous conversation and turn to the discussion of deeper and more important subjects. But then would any advertising agent expect to benefit his firm by producing, in analogous circumstances, a sample of Messrs. Snippet's trouserings or a catalogue of Somebody's Supply Stores and descanting on the merits of the articles?

The question is not one of taste but of expediency, and I, as a member of the oldest advertising firm in religion on this planet, insist that the most important thing—incomparably the most important thing—in the world has as much right to be advertised, to be pushed, to be boomed, to be dinned into men's ears, as any other article that they need, whether they are aware of their necessity or not. Further, in an age like this, when to preserve a dignified silence or to talk in whispers is about as useful for all practical purposes as burying one's talent in a napkin, I say it is the duty of all Christian men to see that their religion is brought before the eyes of all men, and kept in the front, as prominently as possible. Why should we disdain the use of advertisement in this connection? Dignified reticence will not

induce men to remember their God, and if a man needs to be shouted at or shaken violently in order to rouse him from his mental and unspiritual torpor of mind, I for one will not be afraid to lose any dignity I may possess by trying to make him hear what he has got to be told.

Faith comes by hearing, and if we do not speak and make our wares known and put them, as it were, into the shop window, how are people going to know what we have got to offer them? The Divine Founder of our religion bade His followers "Go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Why? Because Christianity possesses wares which defy competition and which are needed by everybody. The lapse of time has not affected the quality of those wares in any way, and some of us are inclined to think that mankind is just as much in need of them now as it was two thousand years ago.

I wonder if those worthy people who deprecate the advertising of religion ever ask themselves what, humanly speaking, would have been the fate of Christianity if the apostles and elders of the early Church had neglected the command of their Divine Master to go forth and make every effort they could to bring the light of the Gospel into every home. Why, those humble fishermen and their followers lived for nothing else but to give as much publicity

as they could to the glorious tidings which had been entrusted to them to share with their fellowmen. What else did they do but advertise to the fullest extent of the means at their command the good news of the Gospel? Is it likely that St. Peter and St. Paul, each in his own way burning with enthusiasm to bring souls to Christ, would have omitted, had they been living to-day, to take full advantage of the magnificent advertising methods in vogue among us now? The advocates of "dignified silence" would have received short shrift at their hands, and so long as they could ensure the continuous spreading of the Gospel they would have troubled themselves very little about any charges of irreverence or vulgarity that might have been brought against them.

Though I do not deny the sincerity of many of those who object to the advertising of religion, I do unhesitatingly accuse them of a certain timidity, a lack of that fire and enthusiasm which should animate every Christian soul, and a want of that fighting spirit which was so conspicuous in the early days of the Church. The Christian martyrs had to submit to worse things for their faith than the sneers of the intellectual aristocracy of Rome. The accusation of vulgarity was not one that very greatly disturbed their peace of mind. Yet the Christians of our own day count it too much to endure for the sake of their Master.

So far then from considering this question of advertising religion as one worthy of discussion, my own position is that it is the bounden duty of all sincere followers of Christ to become, in a sense, His advertising agents. I have been called a great advertiser myself, and in such a manner as intimated that the epithet was to be regarded as a reproach. For my part I gladly welcome the designation, for if the charge be true, it can but mean that I have succeeded in recalling the attention of the world—or some portion of it — to the truths which it is in desperate peril of forgetting altogether.

Is it an abuse of advertisement for the Automobile Association or the Motor Union to place prominent notices on the public roads with the object of warning motorists against a dangerous corner or a steep hill? And if not, how can it be an abuse of advertisement for a Christian man to use every means in his power to restrain his fellow-creatures from their mad rush to destruction, to placard the easy paths they are pursuing with warning notices of the precipices at the end, and to raise his voice as loudly as possible in inducing them to take the one safe road which will bring them, without disaster, to their destination?

In this, as in so many other matters, all we need is a little clear thinking. We, as Christians, cannot afford to sit at home with folded hands, expecting a distracted public to inquire after

our wares for themselves. Let us become commercial travellers in the good things of God, and let us lose no opportunity of putting them in our shop-windows and in labelling their price, worth and infinite utility.

XXXIV

THE FETISH OF SPORT

A GREAT many people seem to be obsessed with the idea that the whole aim and object of life is to obtain unlimited leisure, and further that such leisure should be devoted to nothing but recreation and sport. During the last twenty years, and more particularly the last ten, the cult of sport has grown so disproportionately as almost to overshadow every other question, even of the most serious national or imperial interest. International rivalry in games is partially, but by no means wholly, responsible for the present ludicrous, but none the less debasing state of affairs.

No one can be more in favour than I am of a moderate amount of clean, healthy, physical recreation for everybody. Such recreation is indeed a necessity for body and mind, and if I had my way I would extend rather than restrict the facilities for playing games, especially among the poor. But that is a very different matter from taking these games so seriously as to believe that the existence of the Empire is threatened because a foreigner wins the Diamond

Sculls at Henley, or our picked athletes get beaten in the Olympic Games.

In my young days we enjoyed plenty of sport, quite as much as, if not more than, was good for us. But we enjoyed it by way of recreation, not as a serious end in itself, and the pleasure we got out of it was in the playing of the game, and not in the actual result. Nowadays, to judge from the amount of nonsense one reads in the Press on this subject, it would appear that anybody who is defeated in a contest in any sort of sport ought to be thoroughly ashamed of himself. It does not seem to occur to anybody that there can be any satisfaction in having had a pleasant struggle with an opponent, if the result has ended in defeat. And if that struggle should chance to have been for an international championship or trophy, the beaten Englishman is apparently expected to abjure all forms of sport for ever.

Recently, it seems—I am open to correction if I am wrong—Englishmen have not met with such all-round success in competing with their foreign rivals as they should have done. Other nations have taken up our own sports and pastimes and are, to put it flippantly, beating us at our own game. This is all very sad, though I am afraid I cannot quite grasp its disastrous significance for the Empire. However, the people who write about sport in the papers (and so, I suppose, must understand the matter far better

than I do) have got their remedy all cut and dried. Our national pride, which, I gather, has been very deeply wounded by the victories of these impertinent foreigners, can easily be healed if the young men of the country will listen to advice and—*take their sports more seriously!*

That is the proposition. It rather takes one's breath away to be told that this country is not entering into its games with sufficient seriousness. Our budding athletes, I must suppose, are wasting too much time over business and other unimportant matters to be able to devote the proper time for making themselves thoroughly efficient on the playing-fields.

Frankly, however, I do believe this question of national sport is one that should be taken seriously, though my point of view is diametrically opposed to that of the gentlemen who write for the Press. And in the first place I should like to clear the air by saying that I thoroughly believe in the principle that whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. The schoolboy, student or young man of business ought to throw himself just as wholeheartedly into his games, while he is playing them, as he does, or should do, into his work. But in neither the one nor the other should he be so absorbed as to make it his whole interest in life. And in passing I might remark that it is a little odd to find Englishmen at one moment being rebuked for not attending

to their commercial interests more closely and at another being rated because they cannot produce an unbeatable champion at every sport.

For the slacker or loafer I have no toleration, nor has anybody else. But I have equally little respect for the misguided individual whose mind is so oddly proportioned that the whole world presents itself to his imagination as one vast playing-field, wherein sport is the one thing that really matters. And into this frame of mind, I verily believe, an enormous number of our young men to-day are being led by the columns of slushy nonsense that appear daily and weekly in the public Press on the subject.

I shall not be disturbed if what I have to say about sport is set down as extravagance; for to tell the truth I do not think it is possible to be extravagant in dealing with excess in any direction. Setting aside serious crime, there is hardly any evil which is not, roughly speaking, the indulging to excess of something in itself quite harmless or even positively good. No one would assert that wine-drinking, in strict moderation, is a sin. Yet there is scarcely any vice that creates such appalling misery as drunkenness.

In the same way I maintain that excessive indulgence in and devotion to sport is not only injurious, but that it may become actually sinful. One frequently meets men who are clever in a certain branch of sport and who are regarded

by their friends and acquaintances as nothing less than heroes. These men have devoted years and years to the development of a skill in recreation—a recreation which has become a vice, much in the same way as strong drink is unconsciously cultivated by men of weak minds, and one generally finds that these men have very little in common with the ordinary educated individual, who can at least speak sanely upon most questions. He who carries the love of sport to excess can very seldom think or converse about any other subject. His mind is warped; and no matter how fair and straightforward he may be in his particular game, he is committing one of the greatest sins by the misuse of a life which was given to him to use for the good of others and the glory of God.

There is not a single game played in this country which I would condemn as a form of innocent recreation, but I believe there is hardly any popular sport which could not be condemned on the ground that it has done, or is rapidly on the way to doing, far more harm than good among its devotees. A pastime should only be regarded as a health-giving amusement during one's leisure hours, and whether the man who indulges in the game be rich or poor, whether he is worried by business cares or not, whether his bread and butter is jeopardised by giving up hours to play that could be more profitably spent, or his income is large

and he has no need to worry about the necessaries of life, there is still the same wrong in allowing sport to fill his mind to the exclusion of other and more serious thoughts.

Nothing could be farther from my intention than to pose as a spoil-sport, or to interfere with the relaxation and amusement that the poor, especially, need so badly. Yet this growing mania for sport, particularly that form of it which consists in watching rather than taking part in a game, is a species of excess which, if persisted in, may be just as bad, morally and physically, for the race as any other vice. And the worst of the matter is that while obvious vices such as drunkenness and debauchery of all kinds are recognised and condemned, this insidious disease is encouraged and approved. I have come across many young men who would far rather shine in some branch of athletics than rise to eminence in their profession or calling.

For my part, proud as I am of my country, or rather for the very reason that I am proud of being an Englishman, I would be willing to see every English athlete handsomely beaten at an Olympic games festival if the result would be to check this over-glorification of sport. The very terms used by the papers in reporting a friendly encounter between an English and a foreign "champion" are enough to make one's gorge rise. It is not only that the heavy sprawling headlines proclaim "A National Disaster"

or "A Brilliant Triumph," but the description of the actual play would be extravagant if used in reporting the progress of a world-shaking battle. The endeavours made by a cricketer or a footballer to save his side from defeat may be very praiseworthy, and are certainly enjoyed by none more than the player himself, but not even by the most extravagant licence of language can we call them "heroic." Yet this is about the commonest word used in many newspaper reports to bring home to the reader the "prowess" shown by their particular demi-god.

All this overdone and hysterical enthusiasm fosters an entirely wrong spirit in sport. The essence of sportsmanship, as that word used to be understood in this country, is unselfishness. But the hero-worship so commonly indulged in nowadays, is scarcely calculated to produce this quality among our modern sportsmen.

Then again, take the morbid glorification of "results." As I have said, the old-fashioned sportsman recked little of victory or defeat. He did his level best and strained every nerve to win, but he never whined at being beaten, and he was the first to recognise and applaud his conqueror's skill. Yet to-day I fear it is only too true that most football crowds would rather see their own team win by unfair methods than lose honestly to a superior side.

What, however, are we to think of the financial, or, perhaps I ought to say, the busi-

ness side, which is so prominent in modern sport? The question of gate-money enters so largely into sport nowadays that games are rapidly becoming nothing more or less than spectacular shows, and a pastime is judged less by the skill required for its exposition than by its power to attract a big crowd of spectators.

All these things are a bad influence, not only on sport itself but also on the sporting spirit, the moral fibre of the nation. To put it plainly, we are getting a little surfeited with sport, and the result must infallibly end in a bad attack of indigestion. Already I observe ominous signs of squabbling between the devotees of various games as to the superiority of their own particular sport over all others. Just as though it matters twopence what sort of sport a man adopts as his recreation, provided that he gets good exercise from it and indulges in it in moderation.

There is nothing in this world worth giving up one's whole mind to, least of all such trifles as should only occupy a healthy man's leisure time. May I suggest that if Englishmen would take their sport a little more lightly than they are just now being urged to do, and their religion a little more seriously, they would find not only a better time here but a happier eternity hereafter?

XXXV

"THOU FOOL!"

"I will say to my soul : Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him : Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee : and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? "—*Luke* xii. 19, 20.

I AM intensely interested to know why the recording Angel wrote over this particular rich man's grave an epitaph in four letters, F O O L. And it is surely of some importance to everybody in these days to know why this man was such a fool. From a worldly point of view he seems to have been quite a nice man, one held in high esteem like his brother Dives, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day in spite of the poor man at his gate.

Why then was this rich man counted a fool by the Angel of God? The trying part of it is this: that the Angel must have been right. He was not like the ordinary man writing an epitaph over a grave. As a rule there are more lies inside than outside of a cemetery. But the recording Angel, who had exceptional opportunities for knowing the man's whole story,

all his good works, and all his shortcomings and failures, after running up his account, wrote it off: "Thou Fool!"

The thing, I admit, sounds foolish in the ears of the modern world. The man was obviously a success in life. He had prospered in his dealings with others. And he certainly was no fool for holding his stock and not selling when there was a poor market. The Angel could have told him he was a wise man there, and he was a wise man for building great barns wherein to bestow his goods. He showed, in fact, plenty of business acumen in that way. He made provision for himself against a rainy day, and, in strict accordance with the tenets held everywhere in the world to-day, he proposed to make use of his riches to give himself an uncommonly good time.

Had he lived to-day he would only have been following the example set him by many others of his rich friends and acquaintances; and he would undoubtedly have been considerably astonished and hurt if anyone had told him that in behaving in such a fashion he was showing himself to be nothing but a fool.

I can well imagine the dialogue that might have ensued.

"My dear man," the friendly adviser might say, "you are making every preparation for having a good time. But suppose you die to-night?"

"Well, that's possible," the rich man might reply, "though it's not likely. I'm not particularly old, my doctor's just given me a clean bill of health, my heart's sound and my digestion's good. I can promise you, my dear fellow, there's plenty of life in the old dog yet."

"I don't doubt it," persists the friendly adviser, "but after all, people do die suddenly. And if you were to pop off to-night, all these elaborate preparations of yours would seem a bit foolish, wouldn't they?"

"Not a bit of it," retorts the other warmly. "We've all got to die some time, but what's the use of worrying about it? When I'm dead, I'm dead, and there's an end of it. Meanwhile, like a sensible man, I've got to order my affairs on the supposition that I shall be alive to-morrow."

"But, as you say, you've got to die some time, you know," protests his friend, and the rich man bursts into a laugh.

"Of course I have," he agrees, "and that's just why I'm going to have a rattling good time while I live. We've only got one life on earth, and I intend to make the most of it."

That, I take it, expresses broadly the point of view of this man, and of very many men and women of to-day towards life and death. And over the grave of that rich man was placed the epitaph "Thou Fool!" because he ignored the two cardinal facts of existence—he

ignored God and he forgot his own immortal soul.

For this he was written down a fool. He omitted God from his scheme of things; there was no place for the Almighty in his programme. Can anything be more foolish than for a man to live as though there were no God, when, as God's creature, he belongs to God absolutely and entirely, even borrowing from God his power to sin against Him?

"Every moment dies a man," and the Angel of Death is just as busy and just as relentless in Belgravia or Grosvenor Square as down in Aldgate or Commercial Road. Who can be sure of another hour of life?

There is only one Master of the Household of Creation, and He can ring His servants up at any moment, and, unlike other servants, His servants have to answer the summons at once.

We are often told that servants ought to know their place. So they ought, but are we not all servants—the servants of God, whether we have the prizes of this life in our holding or are members of the sweated league?

It is not for any one of us to say: "I have so many acres and so many barns, and such estate and such health and such prospects, and such cellars and such delicate viands, and so many servants and footmen and chauffeurs, that I can live on for so many years indulging myself to the full." When God presses the button, so to

speak, the bell is heard and must be answered with unerring punctuality.

We all know, in short, that we have got to die some time, even though, like the rich Fool I am speaking of, we may not believe that our own turn is coming just yet. And what is more, though we may affect to ignore the fact, we all know there is a God.

From the man in the street to the King upon his throne, we are all conscious of that one great truth, but how many of us live our lives as though we realised it? It is the fashion of to-day to put God outside our lives, to busy ourselves with anything rather than with the most important fact on earth ; to place humanity, in short, where we ought to put our Creator. Some of us try to be grand before God, and we make fools of ourselves and the recording Angel writes again the epitaph "Thou Fool!" over our graves. We are grown so callous that we no longer argue about the existence of God. We are merely indifferent to Him. Is not this to play the part of a fool?

I am sorry to say there are poor fools as well as rich fools. No matter on what rung of the social ladder a man happens to stand, if he ignores God, if he caters for his own life without taking God into consideration, he is a fool. That is why there is such folly in the Press, such folly in the popular magazines, such folly in the romantic literature of the day, such folly and

worse than folly in the daily actions of mankind. The fool in the Gospel story lived as if there were no God. That is why he was a fool. He congratulated himself on the fact that he had many more years in which to enjoy himself. Well, we are all going to live for a great many more years. We are all going to live eternal years, but not here.

Ask the average man if he is ready for death, and in the majority of cases you will find that he is ready—from the world's point of view. He has made his will, he has insured his life, he has taken care, according to his means, that his wife and children shall not be left penniless, and if he is rich enough, he may even have bequeathed a museum or a picture-gallery to his native town. Oh yes, he is ready enough to die, or at least he has, in his own estimation, made all the preparations he can think of in anticipation of an early death.

Only unhappily he has left out the most important of all. He has made no provision for his life after death. He has lived as a self-existent and self-sufficient being, without attempting to foster his spiritual growth in order to enter, not utterly unequipped, upon his spiritual life. Did he, indeed, act with as little foresight in regard to the things of this world, he would be the first to admit and endorse his own folly.

All in the end comes back to this: that

men are learning, with terrible rapidity, to do without God, without religion, without spirituality. Shocking as it sounds, they are even becoming proud of the fact that they are so thoroughly self-reliant. So much has been achieved during the last century on the purely material plane, that man is now accustoming himself to the thought that there is nothing impossible for human effort to achieve, and if that be so, he reasons, why trouble about the spiritual or the supernatural?

All classes are more and more adopting the Fool's motto: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." More and more does the modern world strive after the most feverish and fleeting of pleasures, more and more does the craving for momentary excitement increase, and with every year that passes the dance of life grows madder and more furious.

For many hundreds of years the world profited by the teaching of Christ and His Church. Though men might find it hard to act up to the Christian ideal, they at least sincerely believed in a future life. There may have been as many profligate men and women in any past age as there are to-day, but it has been reserved for our generation to furnish the amazing spectacle of nations deliberately shouldering God aside, as a thing of no account.

We boast that we have out-grown the superstitions of the past. We point with pride to

our empty churches as proof that we prefer reasonable recreation on Sunday to giving up an hour or two of our leisure time to our Creator. We plume ourselves upon the fact that we have emancipated ourselves from the "priestly shackles" which bound our fathers. Are we so sure that upon our graves also the recording Angel will not write that scathing epitaph: "Thou Fool!"?

XXXVI

A MESSAGE FROM BETHLEHEM

All history finds its centre in the crib of Bethlehem. Whatever does not converge to it radiates from it. History is summed up in the story of the Incarnation.

What a strange experience for a King visiting His people, to find He was not wanted! And yet that was, as a matter of fact, Christ's first experience upon earth. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." "There is no room," was the cry, when He sought shelter. Yes, there was no room two thousand years ago, and to-day practically the same cry is taken up, "There is no room." Jesus Christ still finds He is not wanted.

It may be asked why, then, was "the Word made flesh," and why "dwelt He amongst us," if He was not wanted, if He was not to find room among His own? Do you ask me why He, the Infinite, became finite, why the Son of God became the Son of Man; in a word, why "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us"? It was

because He could not keep away. If we did not want Him, He wanted us. He, the Great Physician, knew what was in man, and He knew it was not pleasure, it was not gold, it was not place that man really wanted. God was man's want; his term of arrival being God, his way also must be by God. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." God came to visit His people, says Zachary, "to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to direct our feet in the way of peace."

Yes, not only is Jesus Christ the King of Glory, but He is also the Prince of Peace. On that still midnight the coming was heralded by a host of Angels to the shepherds keeping the night watch over their sheep. Then broke through the silence of the midnight air the message, "Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people, for this day is born to you a Saviour"; then the whole chorus of angelic bands lit up the darkness with splendour, as they intoned the hymn, "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men." God had come to visit His people, starting with the poorest of the poor. What a sight it was for the simple, humble-minded shepherds! Well might they exclaim, "Let us go over and see this that is come to pass"; and well may we re-echo their words in the chorus of the Christian hymn, *Venite adoremus*, "Come, let us adore!"

To you also, my friends, I extend the invita-

tion. Let us, in company with these chosen courtiers of the Lord, seek the rock-hewn cave. Put aside all intellectual pride; open the eyes of faith, and see the great sight revealed to babes and little ones; a Divine Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger; yes, laid in a manger borrowed, not from man, but from the beasts, from the ox and the ass. O wonder of wonders! O mystery of mysteries! Behold the Incomprehensible, the Omnipotent, the Everlasting, whom the heavens cannot contain, shrinking to the proportions of a Babe, lying altogether helpless in the straw of His manger-cradle! Aptly do we read in the revealed word, "His name shall be called Wonderful!"

Let us for a moment glance round, and see what sort of a place it is which the Omnipotent has chosen for His first resting-place on earth. His palace a stable; His courtiers the ox and the ass! And what are the names of the four friends closest to Him, whom He has chosen to be His intimates, while He sojourns upon this earth? Let me introduce you to them. Many of you know them not. They are altogether unfamiliar to the votaries of pleasure, to the world of fashion, though among the humble and the faithful their names are as household words. The four friends who are so intimately associated with the name of Jesus are, Humility and Poverty, Purity and Charity.

See how Jesus Christ identifies Himself with

Humility. Has He not humbled Himself as a little child? Will He not, later on, submit to the law of circumcision? Will He not for thirty years and more lead His lowly life in the obscurest village of Galilee in Palestine? And when He goes forth from His dear home among the hills, shall we not see Him tempted, almost as we are, by the Evil One? Will He any more than ourselves escape the malice of enemies and the jealousy of false friends? Ah, if you want to see Him in His supreme act of humility, watch Him as He sinks to His knees before the arch-traitor and washes the feet of him who will presently hurry off to commit the act of treachery that will end in self-slaughter! When we, who profess to be His followers, gaze upon this picture of Jesus kneeling before the traitor, we may well feel confused, not knowing where to find our own right place. "He humbled Himself"; He made Humility His bosom friend.

But Poverty is no less dear to Jesus than Humility. We have already seen the poverty of His birthplace; but even from it He will soon be evicted and forced to exchange His own chosen country for that of the Egyptians. Poverty! Who so poor as Jesus Christ? Look at Him later on, as He stands knee-deep in the wood-shavings till the sweat pours from His brow. He must work to help to keep a roof over His poor Mother's head. But Nazareth is luxury compared with His future home, for

when He went forth on His missionary tour, the canopy of heaven was often the only roof beneath which He prayed and slept. "The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man," as He Himself declared, "hath no place whereon to lay His head." When at length His countrymen did find Him a bed on which to agonise and die it was a wooden cross, with a Crown of Thorns for a pillow, while the fierce noonday sun burned into His bleeding wounds till death came to His relief.

Look where we may, we can never find poverty like that to which Our Lord was wedded Why, even the pauper may claim a grave, but not Jesus Christ, whom they stripped of all He had—I was going to say of all He was; for they stripped Him of His clothes, and they stripped Him of His skin, and they wellnigh stripped Him of His flesh—and when He was buried, it was in a grave lent Him by a friend. "He loved Poverty," Poverty was His friend till death.

Again, observe how dear to Jesus is Purity. He is born of a Virgin Mother, and He chooses a virgin for His foster-father; while the friend whom He takes to His bosom as the beloved disciple is the virgin John. If there are those outside Christianity who deny the virgin birth of Our Divine Lord, they perhaps do so because with them "Miracles do not happen,"

Disbelief in the virgin birth means tossing to the winds the Gospels themselves, for are we not in the first and third Synoptic Gospels told that Jesus was born of a Virgin Mother? We have the account of it both on Joseph's side and on the side of the Blessed Virgin. They who quarrel with the account do so on what they are pleased to call their principles; because it is a miracle. But it is only one of the countless miracles that go to make up the mystery of the Incarnation. To me it would be a greater miracle to try and account for the universal belief in the virgin birth by ascribing it to a myth rather than to the Gospel.

The very best proof of our dear Lord's appreciation and love of Purity lies in His attitude of pity and compassion for those who by sin have lost this precious, priceless friend. Jesus is in a very special way the sinners' Friend, because He is the One, the only One, who is able to restore them to the friendship of Purity when once that friendship has been lost. "He loved Purity": Purity was the friend of His heart.

And now, lastly, let me introduce you to a fourth friend, knit into the very Heart of Our Saviour: Charity, or, as we sometimes call it, Love. What has drawn the God of Heaven down to earth? Why, it is love: "God so loved the world." Why did He court humiliations, privations, and sufferings? Because "He loved me,

and He gave Himself up for me." And tell me: why did He submit to the scourge, the thorns, the nails, and the cross? Because, "having loved His own, He loved them to the end." Yes, Jesus Christ passes through every phase of love to its consummation in self-sacrifice. It is when He has reached this last stage in His life of love, and is actually expiring on the cross, that we picture Him with arms extended and with heart broken and pierced repeating to the world: "Greater love than this no man hath."

Now, let me ask a short, simple question. If Jesus Christ were to visit us once more, if He were to come unto His own, should we have once more to write, "And His own received Him not"? Should we tell Him, were He to knock at our door, "There is no room"? I much fear Our Lord's second coming would find no better welcome than His first. Why, He has actually come! He is in our midst: "There hath stood One in the midst of you, whom you know not." The world still cries out, "We will not have this Man to rule over us." Worldlings like neither Him nor His friends—Humility, Poverty, Purity, and Charity. But let us divest ourselves of the worldly spirit. Let us renounce all ambition for the things of time and sense. Let us cleave to Christ.

Let us make an attempt this Christmas to deny ourselves, so as to make more room in the inn of

our hearts for Jesus Christ. Bid the beasts within you, your passions, bow down and adore. Summon the four royal Friends as attendant spirits to come and open wide their gates and sing to Him the hymn of the Incarnation, *Gloria in Excelsis*. Invite Him to your homes, hold Him for ever in possession, offer Him all you have and all you are. Be not a niggard of your gifts. Lay before Him your freedom, your memory, your will, and your whole hearts. And from time to time test the reality of your love of Him by your devotedness to His four inseparable Friends. Let us study their lessons, follow them, love them; for, in the measure of our love to His friends during our sojourn here, we shall be able to gauge the room there is in our hearts for Him.

"Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself, with his alms feeds three:
Himself, his famishing neighbour, and Me."

XXXVII

"WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?"

Like the Edomites of old, we, too, at the present moment are standing, as it were, in a beleaguered city, waiting, hoping, and praying for the dawn, with the question rising on our lips and in our anxious hearts, "What of the night?" And to us also comes the double-edged reply, "The morning cometh, and also the night." To the sad, the sick and the downtrodden, to all who are lifting streaming eyes and outstretched hands to those they think can help them, that same answer is the only possible one. Every mortal must be prepared to meet with rain and shine, joy and sorrow, success and failure, defeat and triumph. And especially in such a night as is now overshadowing the world, must we be ready with stout hearts and enduring minds to face whatever the future may hold in store.

But we must be on our guard equally against an over-comfortable optimism and a too-hopeless pessimism—the two philosophies of life which seem to find favour with many, yet both of which contain a false note of prophecy. We must beware of the too-glib optimist, disguised

under a hundred fancy names, who pretends that, after this war, we shall need only to adopt his particular social, political, or ethical programme to ensure a return of the Golden Age and an era of universal prosperity and peace.

"The morning cometh!" How often has not that cry rung in the ears of suffering humanity! How often has not mankind been told that it is standing at the gates of the Promised Land! And how often has it not had cause to know that the Earthly Paradise is not to be found, and that for every evil that we abolish there arise a dozen new ones; for every craving we satisfy, a hundred fresh desires spring up in our restless hearts. With the poet, let us remember that,

> "In trying to undo one riddle
> And to find the true,
> We knit a hundred others new."

Yes, the morning cometh, but listen to the mocking voice, "And also the night."

And turn for a moment to the prophetic utterances of the other school—that of the pessimist. It is a philosophy which may dangerously attract many whom this war has hurt in their business and their pocket, or in the loss of a dearly-loved relative or friend. But primarily, pessimism as a creed is held by the slave of pleasure sick and satiated with his ever-

lasting banquet, by the materialist with his shallow gospel of despair, and by the cynic, the misanthrope and the egoist, who see no hope for the human race because they have no sympathy, no feeling for their joys and sorrows. These are the pessimists who proclaim that virtue is hypocrisy, that religion is a snare and that we are but as sailors voyaging on a rudderless vessel, destined to inevitable shipwreck on the rocks of death. We have no pilot, we have no compass, we have no soul, we have no God. To those who seek for comfort they have but one reply, "And also the night!"

Happily, the school of pessimism has never been able to command the audience it has striven so hard to obtain. Indeed if such a creed were ever to get hold of the mass of civilised mankind, the stream of life would be poisoned at its source. The only light left upon earth would be the phosphorescence of corruption, or the corpse lights flitting to and fro over the graves of Faith, Hope and Love.

> "We feel, although we cannot prove,
> That every cloud that spreads above
> And veileth Love, itself is love."

That is the true antidote to pessimism and one that in normal times is effective. But these are not normal times, and it may well be that the doctrine of despair, in one or other of its forms, may find an entrance into

many a mind that, in more peaceful days, would have rejected it without a second thought. We must be on our guard, then, against harbouring this delusion, one even more dangerous than an unreasoning optimism. We must avoid both the Scylla and Charybdis of conduct.

Both are harmful, because both are false. The gospel of the optimist is false because it ignores all that is implied in the story of the fall of man; the gospel of the pessimist is false because it ignores all that is comprehended in the story of man's redemption. There is only one true philosophy of life, and it is comprised in that question and answer of a day now long fled: "Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, and also the night." Neither buoyed up with delusive hopes nor unduly cast down by an unreasoning despair, we must tread with firm and patient step our appointed road, relying not on ourselves alone, but putting our faith in the Power from which we have only to ask, to receive all the strength and support we need. In His own way, God always answers the sinner's prayer. "A contrite and humble heart Thou wilt not despise."

I cannot forbear to quote in this connection the memorable words of Pius X.—that saintly soul whose recent passing away is mourned by the whole of Christendom.

"We are terrified," he wrote, "beyond all

else, by the disastrous state of Society to-day. For who can fail to see that Society is at the present time, more than in any past age, suffering from a terrible and deep-rooted malady which, developing every day and eating into its inmost being, is dragging it to destruction? The disease is apostasy from God, than which nothing is more allied to ruin. For behold, they that go far from Thee shall perish.

"This is the night. But 'the morning cometh.'

"We take courage in Him who strengthens us; and setting ourselves to work, we proclaim that we have no other programme but that of 'restoring all things in Christ,' so that 'Christ may be all in all' . . . . His interests shall be our interests, and for these we are resolved to spend all our strength, and, if need be, our life."

Apostasy from God! There, in a phrase, is summed up the error both of the optimist and of the pessimist. Pride is the sin of one, despair is the sin of the other, and each is the result of turning away from the Almighty Father. In that robust rallying cry of Pius X. you will find neither the self-sufficiency of the optimist nor the despondency of the pessimist, but only the hope and trustfulness of the man who puts his faith in a higher Power—in God.

Looking down from his watch-tower upon a world troubled and tried in the dark night of

adversity by a storm of conflicting passions, the watchman can bravely make answer to our appeal, "The morning cometh, and also the night." We are to expect neither the best nor the worst. Our part is to be ready for all things that may befall us, being neither puffed up with prosperity nor unduly cast down by adversity, but putting our trust in One who never failed his children yet.

> "Well roars the storm to those who hear
> A deeper voice across the storm."

We must arise and be up and doing. "Take up your cross and follow Me," said Christ. Do not the evil days through which we are passing help us to understand what He meant by those words? Let us put our hearts into our work, realise our mission, and, though the night be dark, plunge into it and go forward to meet the dawn of day. If we are Christians we must follow Christ. And if we are to follow Christ, we must renounce a life of unbroken ease and peace, which means corruption. If we are to be Christian men and women, we must live the Christ life, think the Christ thought, foster the Christ love, be the Christ character. Neither victory nor defeat must have power to shake our souls, for the one will not wholly rid the earth of evil nor will the other mean the ultimate triumph of darkness. "The morning cometh, and also the night." If that

answer holds a word of cheer for us, it also gives us a note of warning. Let us pay heed to both.

When I look towards the battle-fields where our brothers are fighting, waist-deep in muddy trenches, and facing bullet and shell with undaunted courage and coolness, I cannot but ask myself: "And what art thou, my soul, prepared to endure for thy Home beyond the stars and for Christ, thy Captain-King? Arise, and quit thyself as a Christian man and a Christian soldier."—"ESTO MILES."

XXXVIII

THE OLD SPIRIT

I HAVE now set down, though, as I am conscious, in a wholly inadequate fashion, some thoughts on the New Spirit which has been permeating this age, and on the consequences which are already beginning to manifest themselves, as well as on those which are not yet plainly visible. I say again, as I said at the beginning of this book, that I am not one of those hide-bound reactionaries who are opposed to progress, who fail to recognise that humanity must go forward if it is not to go back, and who offer an obstinate and stupid resistance to all forms of new energy and enterprise on the part of mankind.

But, while heartily welcoming all new things that are good, I will make no compromise, I will have no truck with what I recognise to be not progress but retrogression, the more deadly if it be spiritual rather than material. That word "progress" has so obsessed our imagination that we are apt nowadays to regard any reversal of established conventions, any upsetting of settled ideas, as indicating an advance towards some mysterious goal of perfection. So ignorant

are we, moreover, in spite of all our boasted education, that not in one, but in almost every instance, what we are pleased to think of as wonderfully fresh and original views, as a new outlook upon life, and all the rest of it, are but repetitions of what our wiser forefathers long ago examined and rejected.

This New Spirit, then, which has shown itself in many ways, but may, not inaptly, be summed up as the Spirit of Unrest—this New Spirit, I say, must not be taken on trust as truly progressive or excellent merely because it is new. I have shown—or at least I have done my best to show—that it is bad, that, if encouraged, it will bring both the race and the country to ruin, moral, material and spiritual, and that whatever good there may be in it is hopelessly overshadowed by the evil.

Again and again in these pages I have demanded of my readers to look around them and consider the symptoms of this hurried unrestful age—this age of headlines, snapshots, taxicabs and music-halls, when all is fever, fret and fume, when competition is so keen, and the margin of profit so fine, and the desire for luxury so eager, that the one cry beating through the air is "hurry up."

We are living in a day when high ideals are yielding to the pressure of creature comforts, when principle is being exchanged for expediency; in a day when self-sacrificing Christianity is

being bartered for self-centred materialism, when the sense of sin is regarded as a worn-out superstition; in a day when it matters not what you believe, but only what you do, and when you may do what you like provided you are not found out; in a day when the relations between the sexes takes one back to pagan times, while the garbage on which men and women feed is as loathsome as the stuff over which they gloat and chatter; in a day when there is no empty place but in the cradle, no room in which to move but in the churches.

Such is, in part, the effect of this New Spirit, and for confirmation of my words I would ask you to read the story of present day life as it is reflected in society, as it is mirrored forth on the stage, as it is shown in the law-courts, as it is writ large on our bookstalls, as it is published in the society journals, in the magazines, in the daily press.

Well may we ask ourselves whither are we drifting, with God out of sight, and the roar of the cataract distinctly heard beyond the rapids over which we are being swept in our toy boats of frivolity and folly. It would seem that the sons of men who love vanity and seek after lying are no more interested in their whither than in their whence. All that they desire is that they may be permitted to go on their mad way, with no speed limit imposed on them. Nor do they care when or where the end of their

journey may be, if they are able to revel during every moment of the time allotted to them in this world.

Such, I say, are the effects of this Spirit of Unrest which has taken such a grip upon the minds, the souls, and the bodies of our generation. It is not only time to call a halt, to clap on all the brakes, and to bring the whole machine to a sudden standstill. We must do more than that. We must get out of this maddening motor-car, and retrace our steps, painfully, and with much effort, if need be, till we take our stand once more upon the summit of that hill whence we have been dashing at such breakneck speed into the valley of desolation and death.

When I started to write on this subject, I pointed out that there was much to admire in the New Spirit, in spite of its deplorable manifestations in many directions. Yet all that is bad in it comes from itself, and all that is good in it springs, I say it unhesitatingly, from the Old Spirit, the Spirit of Love and Self-sacrifice, the Spirit of Restraint and Discipline, the Spirit that was once revered and honoured throughout this broad land, the Spirit that was revealed to man nearly two thousand years ago on the Hill of Calvary.

What is there about this Old Spirit that my countrymen should reject it to-day as unmanly, and lacking in strength and vitality? It is a

question of words, I suppose, for assuredly I, for one, can see nothing manly in immorality, nothing virile in vice, nothing noble or worthy of respect in the unchecked licence which masquerades under the title of liberty. In what respect did the Old Spirit—the Spirit of Christianity—ever fail in helping and strengthening mankind in its daily troubles, its daily toils, its daily sorrows? If there was evil in the world when the Old Spirit reigned, I cannot see that the world is any happier to-day; nor was that evil the result of the Old Spirit, rather was it the consequence of the failure of mankind to live up to that ideal. Nevertheless, they had their ideal, and they were the better men for it.

Perhaps owing to its restlessness, this New Spirit is very energetic in its preaching of the doctrine of "Hustle." There was a time when "Slow and Sure" was England's motto—and a very good motto it was too. However, not altogether owing to England's fault—for I recognise that the press of foreign competition must be met—that motto has been abandoned, and thoroughness has had to give place to rapidity. Disastrous as the consequences of this policy of driving men must be in the long run, there is one cant phrase of the day, not so often practised, by the way, as preached, which we might all follow with advantage.

"Do it Now!" That is the new catchword, and I, personally, have nothing to say against

it, provided that the thing to be done is worth the doing. But of how many of the matters connected with the business, the pleasure, or the daily routine of our lives can we say that with truth? Duties there are which have to be performed, work which has to be accomplished, but it seems to me that a vast amount of energy is expended in these days with a very disproportionate result.

If we were to put a hundredth part of the activity we so often waste in trying to improve our worldly position into the even more serious business of improving our moral characters, what an incalculable return we should get.

Ten minutes here, ten minutes there—are we so dreadfully pressed that we cannot even spare so much time from the service of man to the service of God? Unlike His creatures, God is not a hard taskmaster, though the New Spirit would like to prove Him so. He asks so very little from us, and gives us such high wages in payment, that it is a wonder to me how man can be so neglectful of Him.

Well, the Old Spirit tells us that "It is never too late to mend," and the New Spirit, though not with such originality as it seems to think, tells us to "Do it Now!" Cannot we, in this particular at least, combine the two Spirits, become, and that at once, hustlers in the only service worth the name, and make an effort—each one of us, a personal, individual

effort—to make Christendom once more what its name implies?

It is my business to preach, but I have tried not to preach too much in these pages. What I have endeavoured to do is to rouse my fellow-countrymen to a sense of the reality of things, to get them to view life in juster perspective, to put before them some home truths which some of them appear to be incapable of appreciating. I have, in short, said what I set out to say, and I can only hope that my criticism may be taken in the spirit in which it has been given.

We must not form our judgment of the state of things by what we see around us to-day. At present we are at our best, but this is a shifting scene, and when the war is over and our victory won, then will be the time to test the strength of the good resolutions made under the pressure of national danger and in a moment of abnormal exaltation. No soldier who has been under fire can ever be quite the same as before that awful experience, and no civilian can have done his or her part under the shelter of home during these months of fighting and of pillage, of arson and of massacre, without realising that, compared with keeping faith with God, nothing on this earth matters in the least.

Printed by Cassell & Company, Limited, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.
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